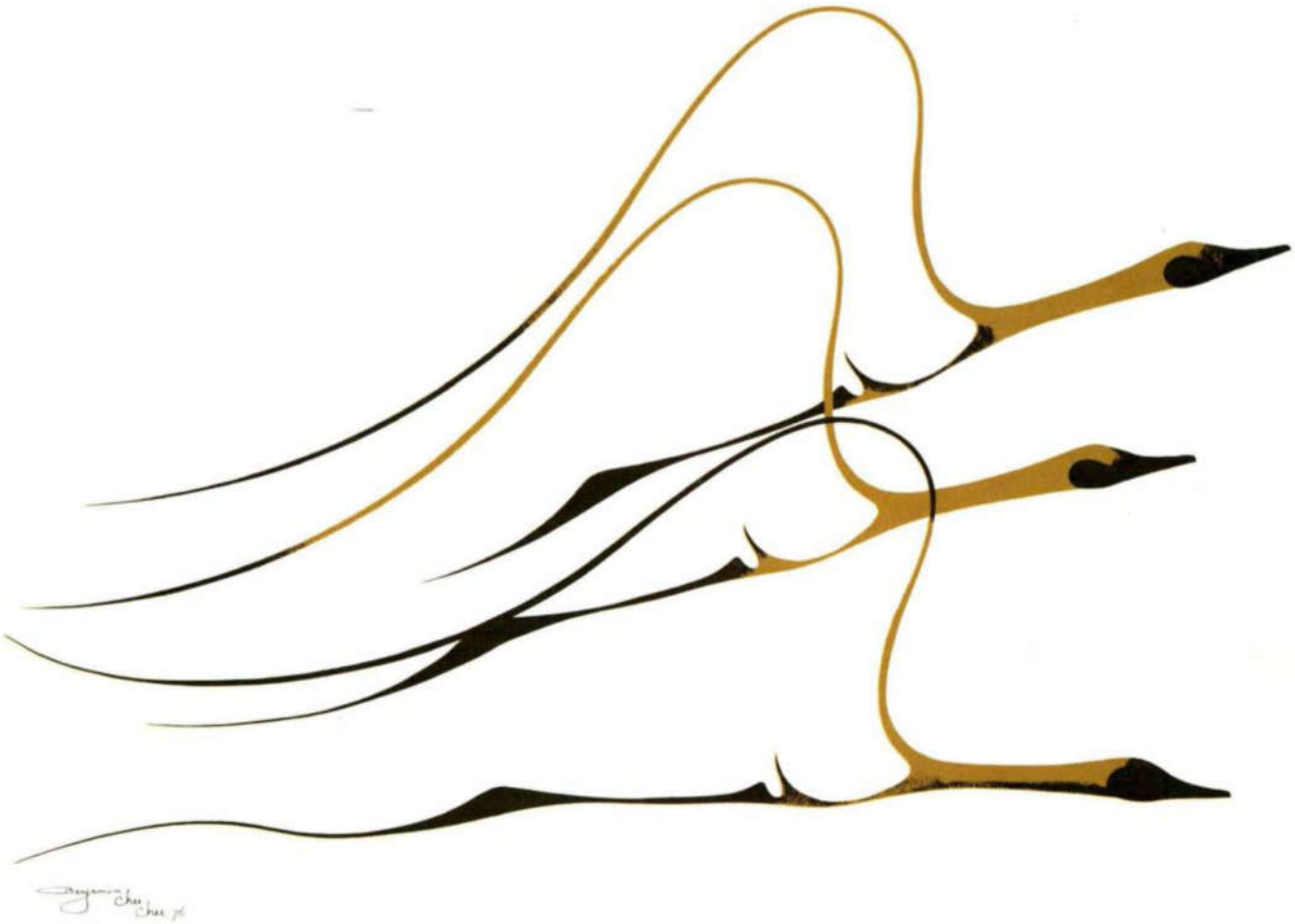
The Beaver

SPRING 1977



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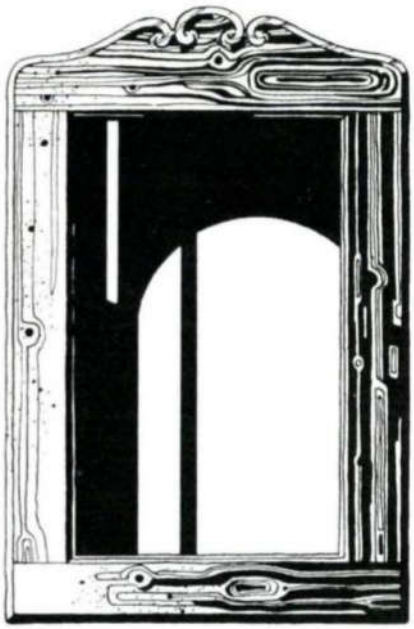

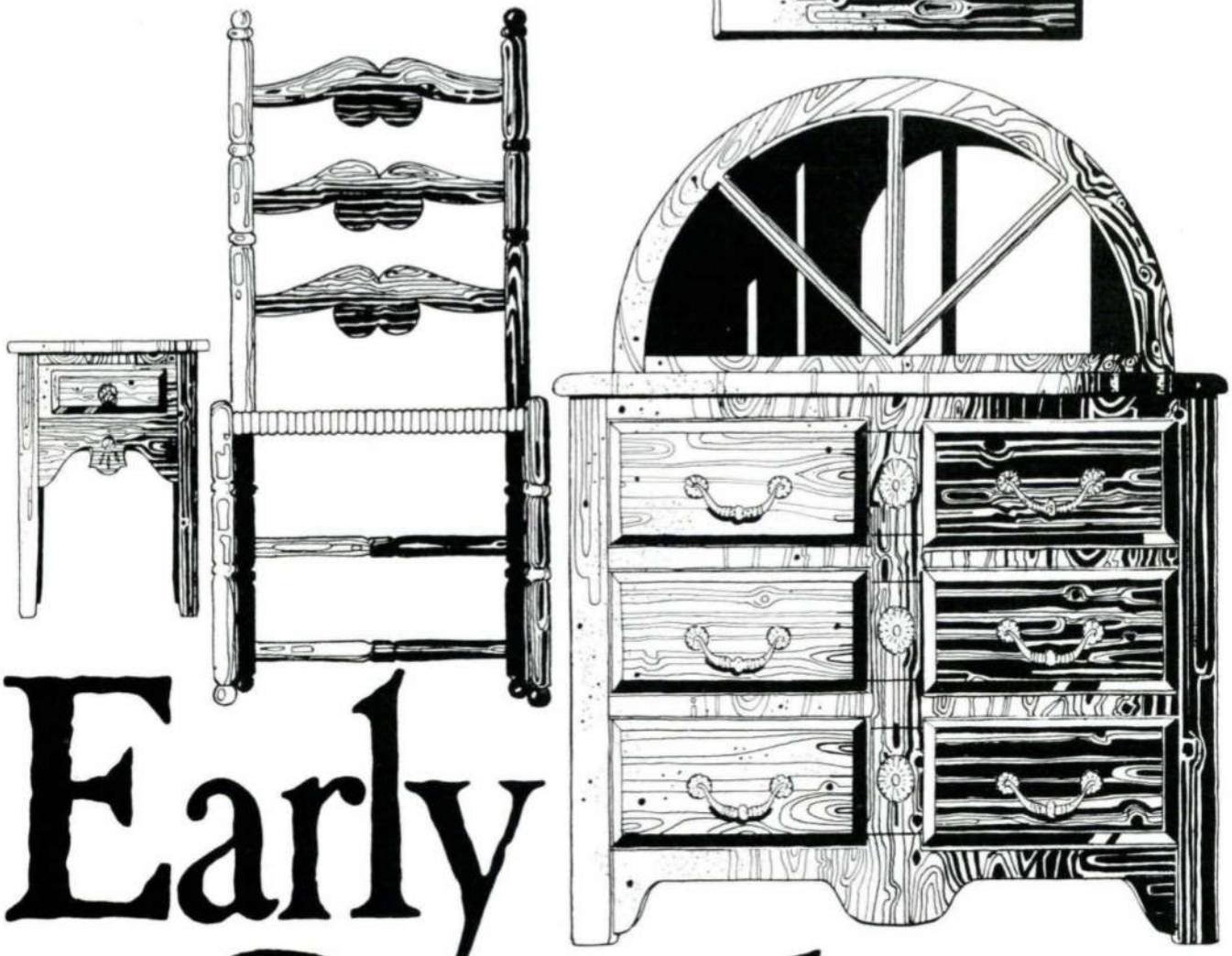

Early Canadiana

The Beaver

MAGAZINE OF THE NORTH

Editor: Helen Burgess

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COVER: A painting of birds in flight by Benjamin Chee Chee, gifted young Ojibway who died tragically by his own hand on 14 March 1977.

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IN FEBRUARY 1801 a Blackfoot Chief, Ac ko mok ki, drew a map for Peter Fidler that showed for the first time the drainage network of the Missouri River and provided new insight into the location and width of the western mountain system and its bands of Indian people.

Fidler sent the map to the London Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company with a letter that carried further descriptions of the country and its people. The letter is published here for the first time, with the map, and a background article.

A scene on the western plains, sketched by Paul Kane in 1848. Young braves from a war party of 'Blackfoot Indians, Blood Indians, Surcees, Gros Ventres and Pay-gans' engage in a horse race 'to which sport they are very partial, and at which they bet heavily'.

The authors gratefully acknowledge permission of the Hudson's Bay Company to publish the Ac ko mok ki map and the text of the Fidler letter, and to quote from other documents in its archives. The authors also acknowledge Professor Theodore Stern of the Department of Anthropology, University of Oregon, for his assistance in identifying features of the map.

The Ac Ko Mok Ki Map

BY D. W. MOODIE AND BARRY KAYE
Professors of Geography at the University of Manitoba

PETER FIDLER, WHOM J. G. MacGregor aptly described as 'Canada's forgotten surveyor', left among his records a variety of maps and geographical accounts gathered from the different Indian peoples with whom he lived and worked while in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company in the period 1788-1822. Fidler, like the other early fur traders, depended upon the Indians, not only for the general conduct of his business, but at times for his very survival in travelling through the vast, uncharted lands of the Canadian Northwest. Perhaps more than any other European trader, Fidler recorded and gratefully acknowledged the often indispensable geographical information communicated to him by the Indians in the course of his extensive travels. It was upon knowledge of this sort that the areal expansion of the fur trade, and indeed the entire process of European penetration into the continental interior, was in large degree predicated.

This article publishes both an Indian map and a letter describing for the first time the huge area of the Saskatchewan and Missouri River basins and adjacent Rocky Mountains. The map was drawn for Fidler at Chesterfield House by a Blackfoot Indian Chief. The letter, written by Fidler and incorporating much information acquired from the Blackfoot and Kootenay Indians, further describes the geography of the area depicted on the map. Together, the map and the letter highlight Fidler's role as geographer and surveyor in the western interior of Canada. And not to be forgotten, these two documents also shed significant light upon the role of the Indian who, in his own way, surveyed and described to the trader the geographical character of lands hitherto unseen by Europeans.

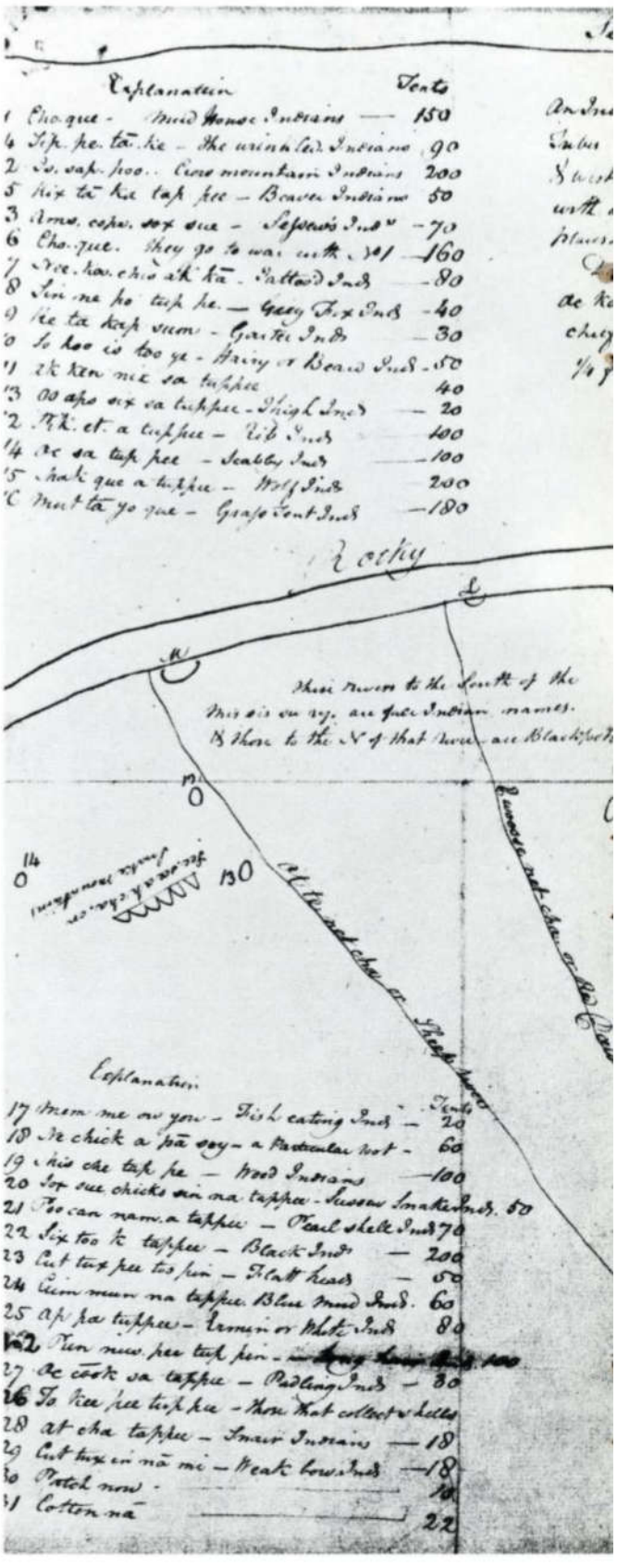
Alexander Mackenzie and Samuel Hearne, along with the sea captains Cook and Vancouver, have long been recognized as the explorers who by land and sea unravelled the basic geographical configuration of the northwest quadrant of the North American continent. To the men who followed in their wake, however, was left the less dramatic, but nonetheless herculean, task of filling in the vast geographical voids surrounding the thin axes of overland penetration carved out by Hearne and Mackenzie. Of these, none was more prominent than Peter Fidler, Philip Turnor, and David Thompson — the great surveyor-geographers of the fur-trade Canadian West. Together, these men furnished the format for almost all subsequent mapping in the western interior. To Turnor belongs the credit of mapping the main river routes into the interior from Hudson Bay. Turnor also trained Thompson and Fidler, who continued this task into the western plains and forests and eventually across the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific. Of the two, the work of Thompson is by far the better known. This has been owing largely to the efforts of J. B. Tyrrell, who acquired and edited David Thompson's *Narrative*, which has since become one of the classics of the fur-trade literature. Although Fidler prepared nothing for publication, and left no great map of his life's work as did Thompson, he must in many respects be considered Thompson's equal. However, like that of the Indian, his full role in mapping and interpreting the geography of the western interior awaits further investigation.

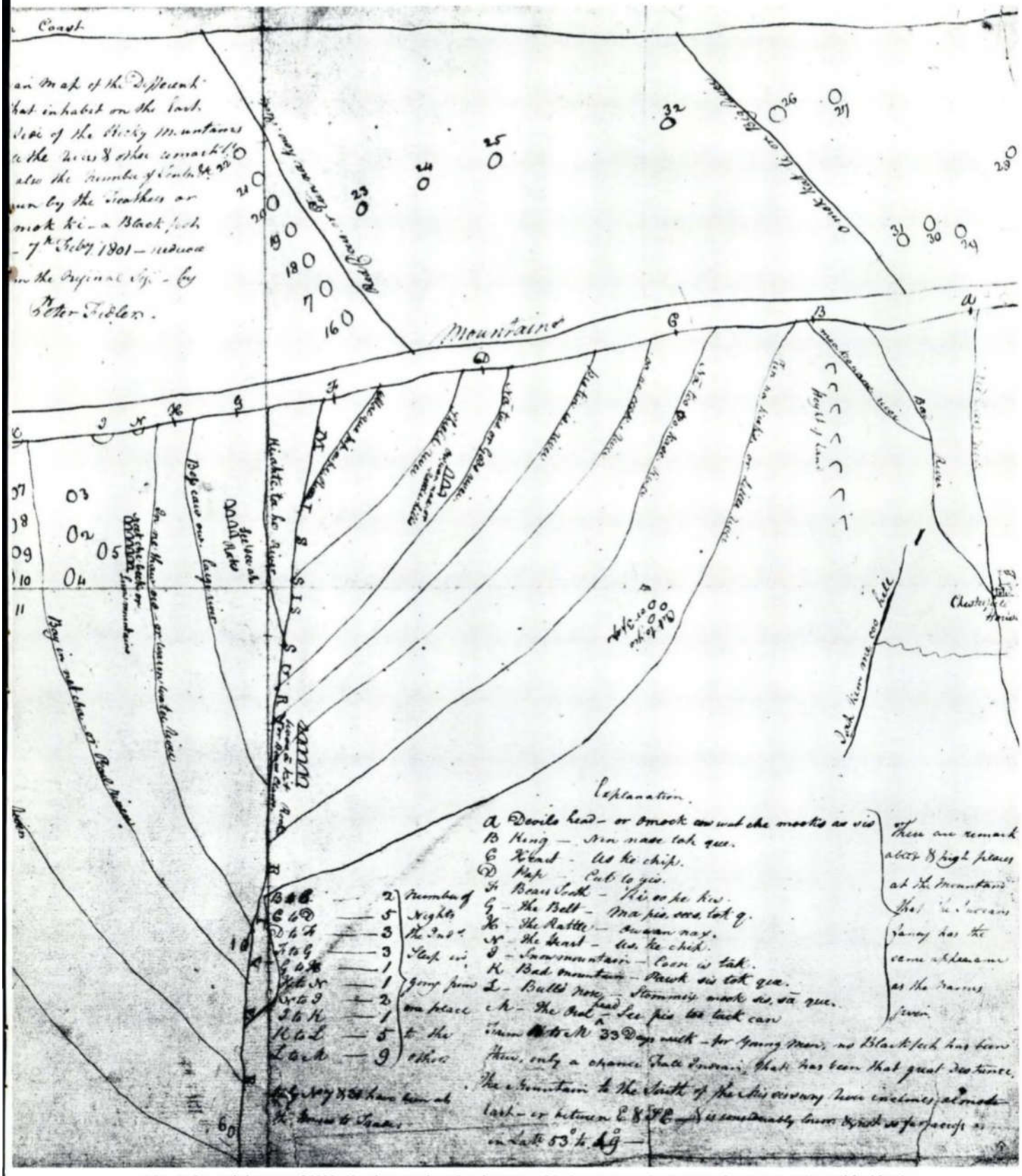
In 1792, Peter Fidler assisted William Tomison, the Hudson's Bay Company's inland chief, in advancing the Company's new inland settlements up the North Saskatchewan River from Manchester House to the site of Buckingham House, located some 100 miles downstream from present Edmonton. Shortly thereafter, Fidler, accompanied by John Ward, set out with a band of Muddy River or Piegan Indians to pass the winter. In the course of his winter wanderings with this Blackfoot tribe, Fidler penetrated a considerable distance south along the Rocky Mountain front and became the first European to provide a record of the Kootenay Indians living in the mountains to the west of the Piegan. In addition to his journal observations, Fidler returned from the Piegans with a map of his journey, which he subsequently sent to the Governor and Committee of the Company in London in 1795.

This map was the forerunner of several maps of this general area which Fidler subsequently sent to London. Included among them were several Indian maps that encompassed much larger areas than those seen by Fidler in the course of his 1792-93 journey. Of salient importance among these Indian maps was that drawn on 7 February 1801, by the Blackfoot Indian Chief, Ac ko mok ki, or The Feathers, while trading with Fidler at the new settlement of Chesterfield House, founded in 1800 at the junction of the Red Deer and South Saskatchewan Rivers. This map depicted the Rocky Mountains and adjacent plains for a distance of some 500 miles to the south of the exploration frontier established by Fidler in 1792-93. In so doing, it afforded the first geographical perspectives on this hitherto unknown, but politically contested, part of the continent. The geographical

INDIAN GROUPS

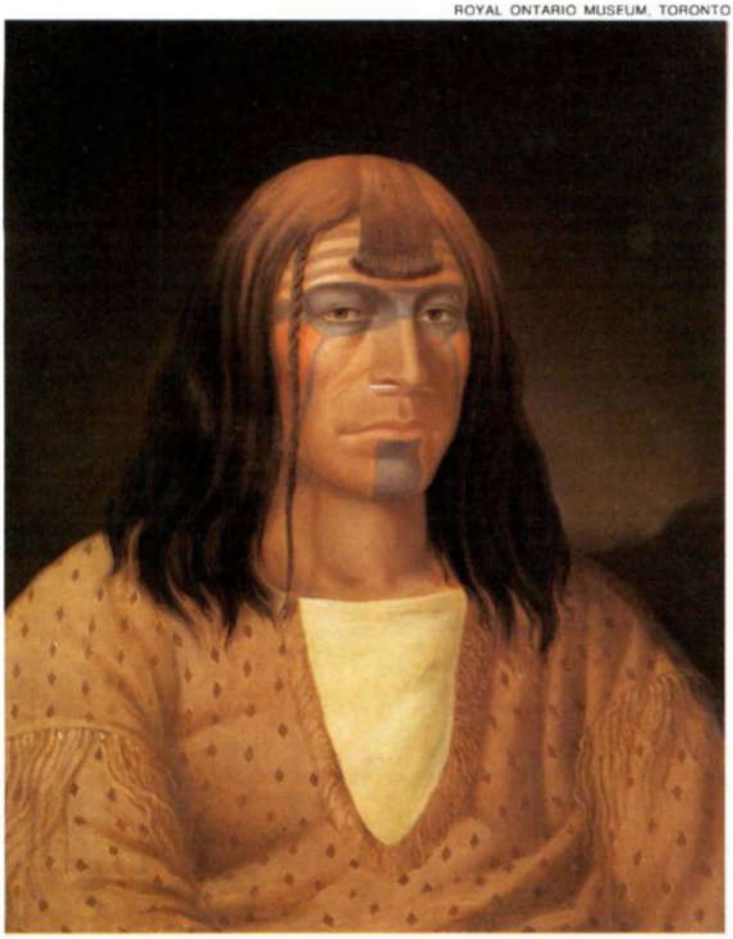
1. *Cho. que* — or Mud House Indians. Undoubtedly one of the sedentary tribes of the Upper Missouri but misplaced much too far west along this river. The westernmost of these sedentary tribes were the Hidatsas, also known as the Big Bellies or Minitarees.
2. *Is sap poo* — Crow mountain Indians. The Crow Indians, a breakaway group from the Hidatsa, who at this time occupied the valley of the Yellowstone River. The Blackfoot name for the Crow in Alexander Henry's quinquelingual vocabulary is *Essapookoon*. They called themselves Absaroke or crow or bird people, after which the Absaroka Range is named.
3. *Ams cope sox sue* — Sessew's Inds. Possibly a group of the Crow or bird people. Henry's quinquelingual vocabulary lists bird as peeksue and black as sixinats, terms which contain the roots of Sessew or sox sue. It is also possible that these Indians were Kiowa or Kiowa-Apache. In terms of geographical location the former seems likely, but the term Sessew indicates the latter. Like the Sarsi, known as the Susse in Siksika, the Kiowa-Apache were Athapascan speakers and it is perhaps in this context that they are referred to by Fidler as Sessews or Sessews south. Or they may simply be a band of the Sarsi.
4. *Sip pe tā ke* — The wrinkled Indians. According to Hodge, the Masi Kota Indians, a division of the Cheyenne, named most probably from a root denoting 'wrinkled' or 'drawn-up', as applied to old tipi skins or buckskin.
5. *Kix tā ka tap pee* — Beaver Indians. Not identified.
6. *Cho.que.* They go to war with N° 1. Another of the Mud House or sedentary groups of the Upper Missouri, again placed too far west along the river, but farther downstream than number one. In view of the relative location and the intermittent hostilities between the Hidatsas and the Mandans, these Cho.que Indians probably were the latter.
7. *Nee Koo chis ak kā* — Tattoo'd Inds. The Arapaho, who were referred to in the sign language of the Blackfeet and Crows by tapping the breast with the tip of the fingers several times, since it was a custom among the Arapaho or Tattooed People to tattoo three bluish symbols on the breast. The group referred to here was part of the northern Arapaho whose migrations later took them south along the Rocky Mountain Front almost to the North Platte River.
8. *Sin ne po tup pe* — Grey Fox Inds. Not identified, but possibly Cheyenne or Arapaho.
9. *Ke ta kap sum* — Garter Inds. Not identified, but possibly Cheyenne or Arapaho.
10. *So hoo is too ye* — Hairy or Beard Inds. Possibly the fur men division of the Cheyennes or Heuhai tā'mo or hair men, so called because they were remote from traders and wore fur robes.
11. *Ak ken nix sa tuppee* — Not identified, but possibly Cheyenne or Arapaho.
12. *Pik et a tuppe* — Rib Inds. Not identified, but possibly Cheyenne or Arapaho. However, Trenholm identifies the Ribs as the Bannocks of northern Idaho, although on the Ac ko mok ki


Explanation
Tents
1 Cho.que - Mud House Indians — 150
4 Sip.pe.tā.ke - The wrinkled Indians 90
2 Is.sap.poo... Crow mountain Indians 200
5 Kix tā ka tap pee - Beaver Indians 50
3 Ams. cope. sox sue - Sessew's Ind^s -70
6 Cho.que. They go to war with N°1 —160
7 Nee.koo.chis ak kā - Tattood Inds —80
8 Sin ne po tup pe. — Grey Fox Inds -40
9 Ke ta kap sum - Garter Inds —30
10 So hoo is too ye - Hairy or Beard Inds -50
11 Ak ken nix sa tuppee 40
12 Pik et a tuppee - Rib Inds — 20
12 Pik. et. a tuppee - Rib Inds 100
14 Ac ca tup pee - Scalby Inds —100
15 Shak que a tuppe - Wolf Inds 200
16 Mon tā yo que - Grass Point Inds —180
Explanation
17 Mem me ow yow - Fish eating Inds — Tents 20
18 Ne chick a pā soy - a Particular root - 60
19 Chis ske tup pe — Wood Indians —100
20 Sop sue chicks sin na tuppee - Sussew Snake Inds. 50
21 Poo can nam.a tuppee - Pearl shell Inds 70
22 Six too te tuppee - Black Inds — 200
23 Cut tup pee tes pin - Flatt heads — 50
24 Sim mun na tuppee. Blue mud Inds. 60
25 Ap pa tuppee - Ermin or White Inds 80
26 Pun mow pee tup pin - [illegible] 100
27 Ac cook sa tuppee - Padling Inds — 30
28 Ac ka tuppee - Those that collect Skins
29 At cha tuppee - Smart Indians — 18
30 Cut tup ee nā mi - Weak bow Inds —18
31 Potch now - 10
Cotton nā 22



The Ac ko mok ki map of 1801. Numbers are keyed to location of Indian groups; the letters indicate mountains and highlands.

ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM, TORONTO



'Nez Percé Indian'. From a painting by Paul Kane.

map they are placed a great distance to the south along the upper Big Horn River.

13. *Oo aps six sa tuppe* — Thigh Inds. Not identified, but possibly Cheyenne or Arapaho.
14. *Oc sa tup pee* — Scabby Inds. Possibly the Oi'vimâna or Scabby people, a principal division of the Northern Cheyenne.
15. *Mak que a tuppee* — Wolf Inds. The Loup or Wolf Pawnee, living with the Pawnee on the lower Loup River, Nebraska. Their name for themselves derives from tskin, meaning wolf.
16. *Mut tā yo que* — Grass Tent Inds. Possibly a group of Snake or Shoshoni Indians, which Alexander Henry calls the Straw Lodge people or Muttooyettape. Described in sign language by a serpentine motion, identifying them as snakes or as weavers of grass houses. About this time the northern and eastern Shoshonis lived in tipis but in the drier sagebrush country to the west they used brush shelters. This suggests that this group may belong to the Northern Paiute.
17. *Mem me ow you* — Fish eating Inds. Not identified.
18. *Ne chick a pā soy* — a particular root. Not identified.
19. *Nis che tap pe* — Wood Indians. Not identified.
20. *Sox sue chicks sin na tappee* — Sussew Snake Inds. The term Snakes was applied to many different groups of Shoshoni but most frequently to the northermost in eastern Oregon and adjacent areas of Idaho.
21. *Poo can nam a tappee* — Pearl shell Inds. Not identified.
22. *Six too k tappee* — Black Inds. Probably the Utes who, according to Hodge, were known by most of the plains tribes as 'Blackmen', or 'Black people'.
23. *Cut tux pee too pin* — Flatt heads. The name Flathead was applied to several tribes that flattened the heads of their children. The Salishan Flatheads referred to here, however, did not flatten the heads of their children, but acquired their name (Têtes-Plates) from Canadian voyageurs who saw slaves from the coast with deformed heads living among them.
24. *Cum mun na tappee* — Blue Mud Inds. The Nez Percé, also known as the Green Wood or Blue Earth Indians. The descriptive name 'pierced nose' was used by the French to describe the supposed practice of piercing the noses to insert dentalium. The Siksika name was koomoonnotape.
25. *Ap pa tuppee* — Ermin or White Inds. Not identified.
26. *To kee pee tup pee* — Those that collect shells. Possibly the Pend d'Oreilles, or Kalispel. Alexander Henry called the Kalispel the Big River or Ear Bob Indians, which in Siksika he gives as Omuksenahatati or Big River people, adjacent to the Columbia River or the O mok kat ti.
27. *Ac cōōk sa tappee* — Padling Inds. These are the Pend d'Oreilles or the Kalispel, but probably the former.
28. *At cha tappee* — Snair Indians. These are the Snare Indians, the northernmost shown on the map. They were a small Salishan group who were driven from the Kootenay valley and took refuge about this time in the headwaters of the Fraser River where, according to Henry, they were subsequently pressed by the Crees and Assiniboines. According to Jenness, they became extinct in the early decades of the nineteenth century.
29. *Cut tux in nā mi* — Weak Bow Inds. These are the Patooksenahma, given by Henry in his Siksika vocabulary and translated as the Lake or Flat Bow Indians. The latter comprised the Lower Kootenay.
30. *Patch now*. Not identified.
31. *Cotton nā*. These were the Upper Kootenays, who, along with the Arapaho were the only tribes on the map to have traded at the Hudson's Bay Company posts by 1802. Unlike the Lower Kootenay or Weak Bow, they frequently hunted the buffalo on the plains to the east.
32. *Pun nus pee tup pin* — Long hair Inds. Although the Crow were frequently referred to as the Long Haired People, Josephy suggests that this group was part of the Interior Salish.

MOUNTAINS AND HIGHLANDS

A. Devils Head — or *omock cow wat che mooks as sis:* Present Devil's Head Mountain prominently located

at the east end of Lake Minnewanka, Alberta. [Latitude 51°15'N]
Iah kim me coo hill: The Cypress Hills of southwest Saskatchewan and southeast Alberta.

B. King — *Nin nase tok que:* Present Chief Mountain, also known as the Governor by the Crees. A prominent outlier of the Lewis Range near the Montana-Alberta border which Fidler sighted from a distance of about 75 miles.

C. Heart — *Us ke chip:* Heart Butte in the central foothills of the Lewis Range. [Latitude 48°15'N]
Cut to yis or 3 paps: The Sweetgrass Hills of Montana located on the interfluve between the Milk and Marias Rivers. They are comprised of three conspicuous paps or buttes: West Butte, Gold Butte and East Butte. [Latitude 48°50'N]

D. Pap — *Cut to yis:* Teton Peak on the upper waters of Teton River in northwest Montana. [Lat. 47°50'N]
Ow wan nax or Rattle Hills: Not identified, but in view of their location as well as the types of features shown on the map along the Rocky Mountain Front, these hills may well be the Judith Mountains in central Montana. [Latitude 47°20'N]
Woos ā kit Rocks or Bears Claws: Present Bearpaw Mountains, a discrete highland between the Missouri and lower Milk Rivers. [Latitude 48°N]

F. Bears Tooth — *Ki oo pe kis:* Present Beartooth Mountains in the Absaroka Range in northwest Wyoming. [Latitude 45°N]

G. The Belt — *Ma pis sees tok q.:* The Little and Big Belt Mountains of west-central Montana lying between the Lewis and Absaroka Ranges, and beginning in the north where the Missouri passes from the mountains at Latitude 47°N.

H. The Rattle — *Ow wan nax:* Most probably Rattlesnake Mountain in the central front of the Absaroka Range. Located north of the Shoshone River near present Cody, Wyoming. [Latitude 44°35'N]
Neetche beek or Snowy Mounts. Rocks: Possibly the Crazy Mountains [Latitude 46°N]

N. The Heart — *Us ke chip:* Heart Mountain in the central front of the Absaroka Range roughly ten miles northeast of The Rattle. [Latitude 44°38'N]

I. Snowmountain — *Coon is tak:* The Big and Little Snowy Mountains, which comprise an outlier east of the Little Belt Mountains between the Missouri and Musselshell Rivers of central Montana. [Latitude 46°45'N]

K. Bad Mountain — *Pawk sis tok que:* Not identified.

L. Bull's Nose — *Stommix mook sis sa que:* The Bull Mountains between the Musselshell and Yellowstone Rivers to the north of Billings, Montana. [Latitude 46°20'N]

M. The Owl head — *See pis too tuck can:* The Owl Creek Mountains, an outlier of the southern Absaroka Range, in west-central Wyoming along the upper waters of the Big Horn River. [Latitude 43°30'N]
Sec see ah cha or Snake Mountains: Possibly the Rattlesnake Range of central Wyoming to the west of the North Platte River. [Latitude 42°45'N]

STREAMS

Red Deers River: Red Deer River, Alberta.
Bad River: Bow River, Alberta.
moo-koo wans river: Oldman River, Alberta.
Heyht of Land: The drainage divide between Hudson Bay and Gulf of Mexico drainage.

ARCHIVES OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

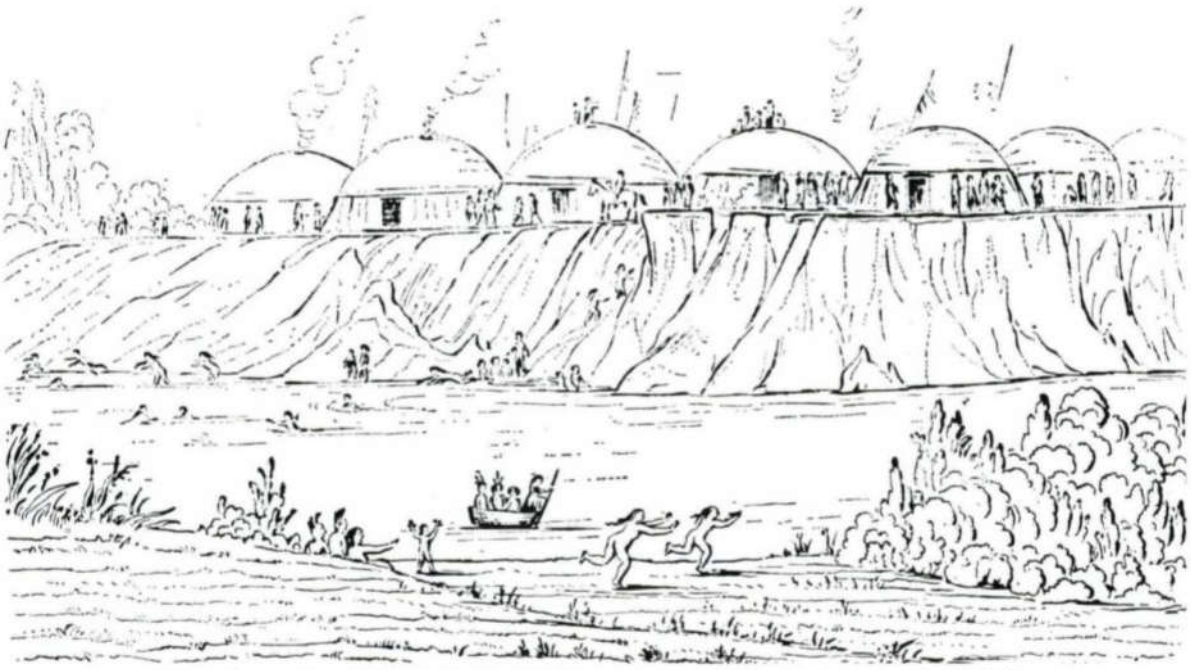
An eminent Minnitaree Indian in ceremonial dress holding a medicine pipe. Painted by Karl Bodmer, 1834.

Pun na kicks or Little river: Milk River, Alberta and Montana.
Nā too too kase River: Marias River, Montana, or its tributary, Two Medicine Creek.
oo ne ceese river: Possibly Teton River, Montana.
pistin is river: Possibly Deep Creek, Montana.
nā tus or Gods river: Sun River, Montana.
Shield river: Dearborn Creek, Montana, or a misplacement of the present Shields River, a north bank tributary of the Yellowstone River.
Mac que pip oupe River: Not identified.
MISSISSURY: Missouri River.
Kiahte ta he River: Possibly Belt Creek, Montana.
Bess caw ow large river: Possibly Arrow River, Montana.
In ne shaw ow — or warm water river: Possibly Judith River, Montana.
Bay in net cha or Pearl river: Musselshell River, Montana.
E woosse net cha or Red Deers river: Yellowstone River, known to the Cree and Assiniboine as Red Deer River.
Otte net cha or Sheep river: Big Horn River or Little Missouri.
O mok kat ti or Big river: Undoubtedly a schematic version of the Columbia River.
Red Deers or *E* [?] *un na kow* River: Again a schematic version, this time of the Snake River erroneously shown as flowing directly to the Pacific.

information recorded upon it, moreover, was rapidly incorporated into the new and authoritative maps of North America being collated and published at this time by the London cartographer, Aaron Arrowsmith. It was to prove of great importance, not simply in terms of its contribution to geographical knowledge, but because of its impact upon the subsequent exploration and geopolitical evolution of this section of North America.

Sent to the London Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company on 10 July 1802, The Feathers' map was incorporated into the revised Arrowsmith map of that year. According to Alice M. Johnson who edited *Saskatchewan Journals and Correspondence* (H B Record Society, Volume XXVI), 'The King George carrying "some Maps & Papers" sent by Fidler in 1802 arrived in London on 23 October . . . By 17 December [Alexander] Lean [Secretary of the

Within a year, the information from the Ac ko mok ki map was incorporated into the Arrowsmith map of 1802.



A Gros Ventre village high on the bank of the Missouri river. From a sketch by George Catlin, 1832.

Hudson's Bay Company] was writing to Sir Joseph Banks, President of the Royal Society, and to Alexander Dalrymple, Hydrographer to the Admiralty, saying that Fidler's maps and papers were deposited with Mr. Arrowsmith . . . and that it would be highly satisfactory to the Company if these should be of sufficient importance to attract their notice. In the letter to Banks, Lean said, "Mr. Arrowsmith . . . considers them as important in ascertaining, with some degree of certainty, the sources of the Missisoury, they also convey much curious Information respecting the face of many Countries hitherto unknown to Europeans".'

The Ac ko mok ki map, together with Fidler's accompanying letter, corroborated the British hypothesis of a continental divide in these latitudes, and provided new insights into the location and width of the western mountain system. The map was also the first to portray the drainage network of the Missouri River issuing from the Rocky Mountain front. These latter features were seized upon by the American President, Thomas Jefferson, and by his Secretary of the Treasury, Albert Gallatin. Both of these men regarded the Missouri River as a future routeway across the continent and as the pathway to American empire in the Pacific Northwest. And it was along this river routeway, shown from the Mandan villages to the mountains for the first time on the Arrowsmith map of 1802, that Thomas Jefferson sent the Lewis and Clark expedition two years later. Not only did the information from the Ac ko mok ki map help to fuel the American design to expand into the Pacific Northwest immediately following the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, but this information, as it was conveyed on the Arrowsmith map, also afforded one of the few cartographic guides for the day-to-day progress of the Lewis and Clark expedition in proceeding towards this goal to the west of the Great Bend on the Missouri River.

Perhaps the most critical decision forced upon the American expedition in the course of their approach to the mountains was that made at the confluence of the Missouri and Marias Rivers. At this important juncture, the Missouri appeared to fork into two branches, and much debate ensued as to which branch to follow. Several days were devoted to exploring the two branches, at the end of which all save the two leaders of the expedition were convinced that the north branch, or the Marias, was the true course of the Missouri. Although Lewis and Clark had for some time doubted the accuracy of the latitudinal observations on the Arrowsmith map, and had in fact made some corrections to these notations while at the Mandan villages, this map nonetheless proved instrumental, if not decisive, in deciding upon the correct course of exploration. Fidler's information placed the landmarks shown on the Ac ko mok ki and Arrowsmith maps considerably south of their true positions, a distortion that was further confirmed in Lewis's mind when he saw the Sweetgrass Hills from

the Marias valley and no doubt associated them with Fidler's 'tooth' mountain. The importance of these decisions is reflected in Captain Lewis's remarks of 8 June 1805, while at the confluence of the Marias:

> I now began more than ever to suspect the varacity of Mr. Fidler or the correctness of his instruments. for I see that Arrasmith in his late map of N. America has laid down a remarkable mountain in the chain of the Rocky mountains called the tooth nearly as far South as Latitude 45°., and this is said to be from the discoveries of Mr. Fidler. we are now within a hundred miles of the Rocky Mountains, and I find from my observation . . . that the latitude of this place is 47°.24'12".8. the river must therefore turn much to the South between this and the rocky Mountain to have permitted Mr. Fidler to have passed along the Eastern border of these mountains as far S. as nearly 45°. without even seeing it. but from hence as far as Capt. C. has ascended the S. fork or Missouri being the distance of 55 . . . Miles it's course is S.29°.W. and it still appeared to bear considerably to the W. of South as far as he could see it. I think therefore that we shall find that the Missouri enters the rocky mountains to the North of 45°.

Fidler's journey among the Piegans in 1792-93 took him no farther south than the region between the Porcupine Hills and the upper waters of the Oldman River issuing from the Livingstone Gap. Thus, all the cartographic information on the Arrowsmith map to the south of this general area derived from Indians' accounts, a circumstance not appreciated by Lewis and Clark who were under the impression that Fidler himself had penetrated almost to the Missouri. It is not surprising, therefore, that the latitudinal errors on the Arrowsmith map were compounded in the region of the Upper Missouri and adjacent mountains. In this region, Fidler could rely only upon the Indian reckoning of distance in terms of the day's march, which could vary considerably with the nature of the terrain and a host of other factors. From the Upper Oldman River, shown as B on the map, to the Big Horn River at N, is estimated on the map to be 33 days' march. While among the Piegans, Fidler remarked that 'The 4 Snake Indians . . . returned to their own country . . . They say they shall sleep 10 nights before they arrive there which I understand is from 250 to 300 miles a true . . . course.' Using this estimate, the distance between B and N would be between 825 and 990 miles. On a modern map, the distance along the mountain front between the Oldman and the Big Horn is roughly 500 miles, a comparison which provides a rough indication of the latitudinal exaggeration in the Ac ko mok ki map.

Still, the map portrays with reasonable accuracy the main lineaments of a vast area east of the Rockies well in excess of 200,000 square miles. Not only is it a testimony to the remarkable geographical knowledge of the Blackfoot Indians at this time, but it also underscores the fundamental, if still largely unappreciated, role of the Indian in expediting exploration and mapping. In this context, it is noteworthy to observe that the Ac ko mok ki map, although not as dramatic in its effects upon the exploration of the continental interior as was the famous Ochagach map drawn for La Vérendrye, encompasses more than twice the area of the latter. It is also more accurate in the portrayal and orientation of the major hydrographic features that it shows. In addition, the Ac ko mok ki map presents a highly accurate picture of the salient topography of the region, showing for the first time the southward extension of the Rocky Mountains together with its major outlying ranges and hills over the vast stretch of country between the Cypress Hills [Lat. 49° 15'N] of southern Alberta and the Rattlesnake Range [Lat. 42° 45'N] of central Wyoming. Although in the area west of the Rocky Mountains, the information is sparse, and the Columbia and Snake Rivers are shown schematically, Fidler's accompanying letter indicates that the Blackfoot were well aware that the western mountain system comprised several ranges and extended from the Rockies to the Pacific, shown as the Sea Coast on the map. A comparison of the hydrographic and topographic features on the Ac ko mok ki map with those shown on contemporary maps is appended in the explanatory notes.

The Ac ko mok ki map also affords a census and atlas of the different Indian groups of the section of the Intermontane and Plains regions that it shows. The groups are identified in terms of the Blackfoot nomenclature of the time. Although crudely located, these would appear to be unique features among the surviving maps of aboriginal origin on this continent. Where possible, the identities of the different tribes are given in the explanatory notes on pages 6-9.

In addition to the Fidler transcription of the February 1801, Ac ko mok ki map, this paper publishes for the first time Fidler's accompanying letter to the Governor and Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company. The letter briefly describes the construction of the map and provides some of the background information essential to its incorporation into the Arrowsmith series. It also offers some of the first descriptions of the physical and human geography of the Rocky Mountain region lying between the headwaters of the South Saskatchewan and Missouri Rivers.

The information on the map was drawn from four discrete sources: the first-hand observations of Ac ko mok ki; secondary information obtained by Ac ko mok ki from other Indians; direct observations by Peter Fidler; information supplied to Fidler by other Company servants. The bulk of the cartographic information, however, is derived from the Blackfoot Chief. The Fidler transcription has been reduced for publication from its original size of fourteen and one half inches by eighteen and one half inches. Fidler's transcription in turn reduces by one quarter the original map drawn by Ac ko mok ki.

Peter Fidler's letter: One of the first recorded descriptions of the Rocky Mountain region between the headwaters of the South Saskatchewan and Missouri Rivers.

Honourable Sirs — Oxford House 10th July 1802

The enclosed is a Map of my Journey from Buckingham House to the Rocky Mountains in the years 1792 [&] 3; in Six sheets: there is also an extra sheet and half annexed to the above, shewing the rivers and other remarkable places to the Mis sis su ry river, which is taken solely from Indian information. You will perceive some little difference betwixt this Map and my former one, which I think I sent to your Honours in the year 1795; but this is much the most compleate and exact of the two: besides several additions in this that was not in the former one, which I have had an opportunity of seeing since. I have put down the rivers &c in the Indian names, which is black feet & have translated all that I was capable of into English, in the Indian map. The place marked the Woods edge — all to the north of that Line is woody either more or less, but to the South in almost every direction for several hundreds of miles; even, far beyond the Crow mountain Indian Country, not a single Tree is to be found (by the united testimony of every Indian I have conversed with on the subject) except along the banks of Rivers & Creeks, where in general a little is found, where the different Tribes generally resort; when necessity compells them to leave the rivers & Creeks (to follow the Buffalo) they are obliged to burn dry buffalo dung as a substitute for more substantial fuel. The rivers marked on the West side of the mountain are from the *Cottona how* [Kootenay] Indians information who always reside near them. The enclosed Indian map drawn by the Feathers or Ac ko mok ki a Blackfoot chief contains several different Tribes of Indians both on the East and west sides of the rocky mountain, that we are very little acquainted with, only by name. This Chief has seen the greater part of the different Tribes he has marked down & has heard of the rest when in company with other nations who live nearer those distant tribes & are consequently better acquainted with them. I have reduced his map ¼ from the original size. Beyond the Rocky Mountain & also to the South of the Mis sis su ry river I could not presume to reduce to any determinate proportion — only from the King [Mountain] to the above mentioned river, I have put down the rivers & other remarkable places, solely from the Indian map; the Blackfeet traverses those parts every year in their war parties, and well know them. Those rivers &c are settled by their days journeys and I imagine in that distance the error will not be very great as to their true positions. This Indian map conveys much information where European documents fail; and on some occasions are of much use, especially as they shew that such & such rivers & other remarkable places are, tho' they are utterly unacquainted with any proportion in drawing them. The mountain at the Nā pew ooch e tay cots river [Upper Oldman] is the place where I measured the height of it by means of the Sextant & found it to be in that place 3520 feet perpendicular above the level of its base. I am unacquainted with the method of finding the Altitude of mountains above the level of the Sea — probably other Instruments are requisite to ascertain that point. In general the mountain is from 3000 to 3500 feett perpendicular above the level of its base, and is about 40 miles across in Latitude 50° ½N. The places marked the Devils head, Pyramid, King, Heart &c &c are parts of the mountain that considerably overtop the rest. The King in particular (whence it derives its name) I suppose to be at least 4000 feet above the Level of its base.
The mountain appears like a Stupendous & steep wall across the greater part of the North American continent, & effectually prevents the Buffalo from Crossing it; not one of those Animals are to be found on the Western side. It in general makes an angle of from 60° to 80° with the horizon; it is composed of a hard and solid rock in general, of a darkish colour; in several places there are

B.C. ARCHIVES

Kootenay Indian. From Karl Bodmer.

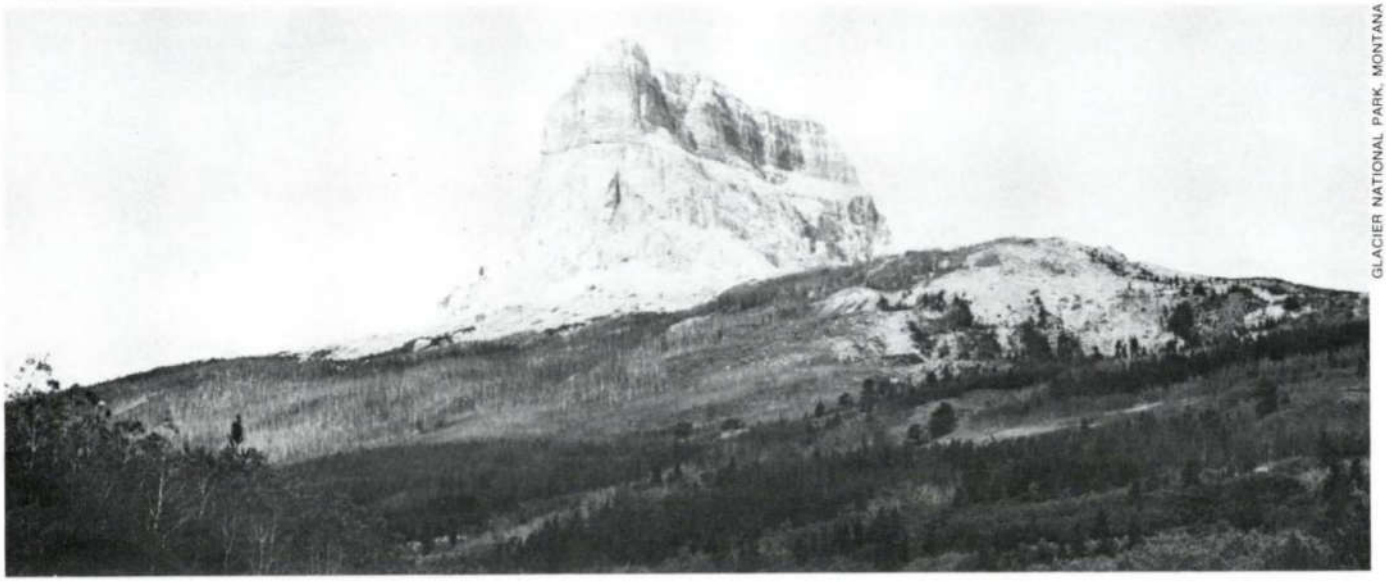
In this document, punctuation has been adapted in part to the modern form. The original spelling of words and the use of capital letters have been retained.

very high peaks of Gravel and small loose Stones; the rains frequently falling there & by washing away the earthy particles probably is the cause of that appearance. There are tolerable sized Pines, with Birch & some few ashs & Firr all along the foot of the mountain, 'till about 2/3 of the way up, where not a single sprig of any kind is to be found. Very heavy & deep Snows accumulate all along this mountain in the Winter, while in the plains on either side in its vicinity not the least falls, so that Summer, or at least no Winter like weather is experienced in those parts the whole Year; except a few cold days now & then when the Wind happens to blow from the Eastward. The wind in general with very little variation the whole year blows from the WSW. & frequently with very heavy squalls. The above is to be understood to the Southward of the 51° degree of Latitude. These heavy & large collections of Snow on the Mountain for at least 4 months, by collecting & stopping all the Clouds & vapors that are drove about by the Wind from the Sea; occasions the great & sudden rises of water in the Summer months in all the rivers that runs toward the East; rising at times above 10 feet perpendicular in 24 hours; this is the case every year either more or less, by the sudden melting of the Snow at the Mountain, which begins in general about the latter end of May or the beginning of June; tho' some years the thaws are much earlier. The height of Land in the mountain, is about 32 miles from the Eastern side & only 8 from the Western. The great quantity of Snow in all that space melting & running this way occasions the very great rises in the rivers, in the Summer as before mentioned. To the South of the Mis sis su ry river, the Mountain is divided into 4 parallel ridges; with pretty extensive level planes & some woods betwixt them, about from 5 to 8 miles across, or between the ridges, with a small river running thro the middle of each valley. To the South, the mountain is much lower and not so far across; as in these northern parts seen by Europeans. To the North of the above river the mountain is one continued ridge beyond Latitude 53° N. Beyond or to the West several mountains nearly as lofty as the main one is seen; these single mountains are but short & interspersed here & there like cocks of hay in a field; they extend in that manner above [sic] 100 miles to the West beyond the main mountain & probably continues so to the Sea coast or very near it. These single detached mountains towards the NW & N are more numerous, than they are toward the W & SW. To the North of the devils head, on the West side, near the mountain, it is a thick woody country, & to the South more open & quite dry, & the natives there have plenty of horses; it is only those that inhabit near the Sea Coast that use Canoes. The Greater part of the different Tribes that live on the Western side, every Spring & Fall

A woman of the Snake Indians — 'a very inoffencive & unwarlike people'. From Karl Bodmer.

B.C. ARCHIVES

King Mountain, now Chief Mountain.



GLACIER NATIONAL PARK, MONTANA

come to the East side of the mountain to kill Buffalo, & make dry provisions; their families remaining behind. The country where they reside is very poor, very few animals are found there, except Jumping Deer a small animal, they also eat a good deal of Fish. About 30 or 40 years ago several of these Tribes lived on this side the mountain, but since the Europeans have been up the Saskatchewan River & have well supplied the different Tribes who reside near the Boarders of that river with arms &c they have drove them beyond, particularly the Snake Indians, which are a very numerous Tribe, but are a very inoffencive & unwarlike people, & by keeping in such small bands. There are no less than 13 different gangs of that nation, tho' they all speak the same Language, they are nearly as much at variance with one another, as if a quite distinct people. Could they be unanimous, by their numbers, they would be able to sweep all the other nations in these parts before them. Wild Sheep are very plentiful at the mountain & are found 2 or 3 miles from its edge on both sides, but never further, in general they live on the very tops of the mountain — they are good eating. Their skin is hairy on the outside like deer, but below next the skin a very fine wool is found. The horns of some of the old Rams are very large & heavy & makes 2 & sometimes 3 spiral turns, if straight some would be more than 4 foot in Length, they are thick & stout in proportion. They jump from rock to rock with great agility & are very difficult to approach. Of all those different Tribes in the Indian map only the Tattood & Cottonahow [Arapaho and Kootenay] Indians have been at any of our houses to trade, the former only this winter, & the latter 2 years ago. But the Southern [Cree] Indians, with the Blackfeet, Blood & Muddy river [Piegan] Indians will still prevent them or any of the other Tribes from coming to trade regularly, it is not in our powers to make or pursuade the Tribes last mentioned to let them come safe to the Houses to Trade, they are so very jealous of their being supplied by us with either Guns or ammunition. To the Southward on both sides of the mountain there are very little woods & consequently very few Beaver, this is the story told by every Indian that has been in those parts. On the West side the rivers very seldom freeze over, & when they do it is only for a little time, the climate is so very mild. The source of the Red Deers & Saskatchewan rivers are put down from the accounts of some of our men who has been there. I have regulated their courses & Distances & imagine they will be found to be placed pretty near their true positions. The Indians when they cross the Mountains are obliged to follow along the banks of rivers & in many places they walk in the water, as on both sides in places it is quite perpendicular & utterly impossible to proceed any other way. On this side the land is in general pretty level with little or no wood & millions of Buffalo & many Red & Jumping Deer which serves the Indians with both food and Clothing. Horses are also numerous. On the West side near the mountain, to the Southward of the head of the Bad [Bow] river, the country is open & level & nearer to the Sea coast to the West, the country becomes woody; plenty of yews & Cedar is found there; very few lakes of any extent are found near the mountain on either side; only one on this side far beyond the Mis sis su ry river near the mountain where a kind of pearl shells come from that the Indians in these parts have a few that has been brought from thence, which they wear as an ornament. They are handsome & have several vivid colours in them. The Lake by Indian information is nearly 100 miles long & lays nearly NE & SW. The water is brakish. Beyond the mountain nearly ½ way to the Sea shore in the Parallel of about 49° are another pretty extensive Lake, full of Islands where a part of the Flatt head Indians reside. These are the only 2 lakes of any extent that I can hear off.

I am
Honoured Sirs
with the greatest respect,
Your most obedient & faithful
humble Servant
Peter Fidler

ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM

Mountain Sheep's Head: a sketch by Paul Kane.

THE WRECK OF THE 'FINBACK'

BY W. O. DOUGLAS

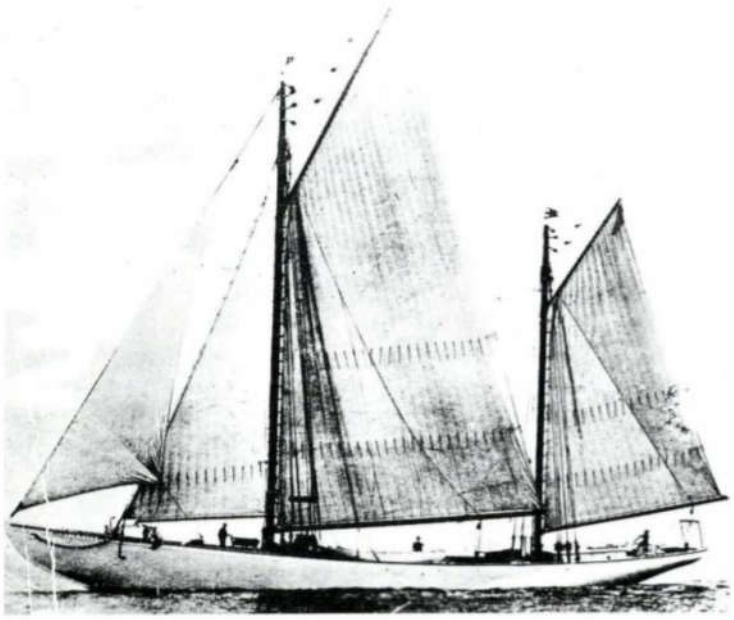
Mr Douglas sailed into the Arctic in 1916 and served there for 17 years, first with the RNWMP and then with the Hudson's Bay Company.

IN THE SUMMER of 1919 I had come down to Chesterfield Inlet from the Royal North West Mounted Police detachment at Fullerton to meet the Hudson's Bay Company supply ship *Nascopie*. In those days we, whose duties took us to remote places, had to develop our own methods of getting supplies to our units. The *Nascopie* could not possibly call at every port.

In my case, I had the *Lady Borden*, a well-powered tug, capable of towing a barge with our supplies. At that time, the Hudson's Bay Company was still doing some freighting from Chesterfield Inlet to Baker Lake, using one of the old, half-decked-over coast boats. It was the last of these to see service in the Bay.

While we waited for the *Nascopie* to arrive, I had my meals with the H B C manager, Solomon Ford, and his assistant, Bill Phillips. We had no way of knowing when the ship would come in, so it became customary for someone to maintain a watch on the high hill close to the settlement. There, with a spy glass, he would scan the horizon for that tell-tale puff of smoke which signalled the annual arrival of the ship.

The yacht 'Finback', later wrecked and purchased with all her equipment and stores by the author for three hundred and ninety dollars.



On one day that I recall very clearly, the excited lookout raced down the hill to inform us that a string of three small boats — two whale-boats and a motor boat — were crossing the mouth of Chesterfield Inlet from the north. A number of thoughts flashed across our minds. Had something happened to the *Nascopie* and were these the survivors coming toward us?

As the boats rounded the point and made their way into the harbour, some of the men recognized the whaling master, Captain George Comer, who was steering the motor boat. No sooner had he set foot ashore than he greeted me and came over to shake hands. He said that his whaling ship, the converted yacht *Finback*, had been badly holed and was now a wreck on a reef at Fullerton. Therefore, he added, he was placing his crew under my care. The 'distressed foreign seamen' had had only enough food and fuel to get them from the wreck to Chesterfield Inlet. I, as the RNWMP sergeant in command at Fullerton and a representative of the Canadian government, was apparently responsible for their food, shelter, and passage back to civilization.

This situation was beyond my experience, although I did recognize that the men had to be cared for under some sort of international arrangement. The Company manager, Solomon Ford, offered accommodation and food to Comer, his engineer, and mate. Fortunately, I also had at my disposal a small warehouse that I had built to store any police supplies that we might leave at Chesterfield. Here I proposed to house the seven crew members. I managed to borrow a cook stove and some kitchen-ware from the Hudson's Bay Company and assured the men I would do all I could to make them comfortable until the supply ship arrived.

Captain Comer was an experienced arctic whaling captain. His name first appeared on the records as having wintered at Fullerton in 1897; he had had a successful summer and had taken six whales. He returned to the area year after year and knew the waters around Fullerton better than any other man. I admit that a number of doubts crossed my mind. Either the captain or the owners of the *Finback*, I suspected, may have wanted to dispose of the ship.

I had a long chat with Captain Comer about the wreck of his vessel. He explained that the *Finback* was a yacht converted to a whaler. She had an exceptionally deep keel and, he told me, this fact had

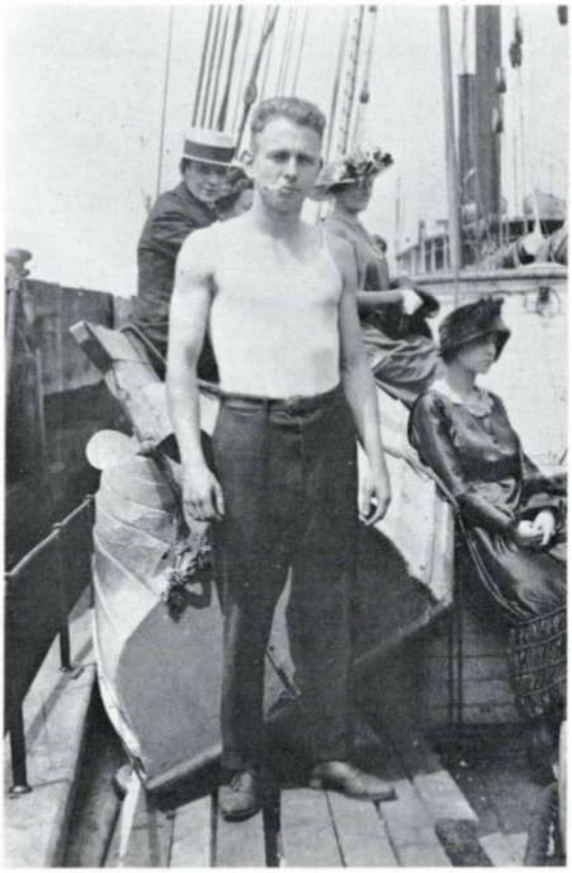
slipped his mind while navigating the waters near Fullerton. I did not quite believe him. I next interviewed the members of the crew. They were rough, violent men — wharf rats was the term Comer used to describe them — shanghaied from a New England port. With the exception of one man, a Swiss who apparently was a watchmaker, they were all potential trouble-makers. I asked Captain Comer if the men were armed. He replied that the only weapon in the group was his own sporting rifle. I believed him until one day an excited Eskimo ran into the Company building to inform me that fighting had broken out among the seamen, and that shots were being fired. I immediately got in touch with Captain Comer.

Comer was then, so he told me, over seventy years of age. He was a powerfully-built man, not much over average height, but rugged and fit.

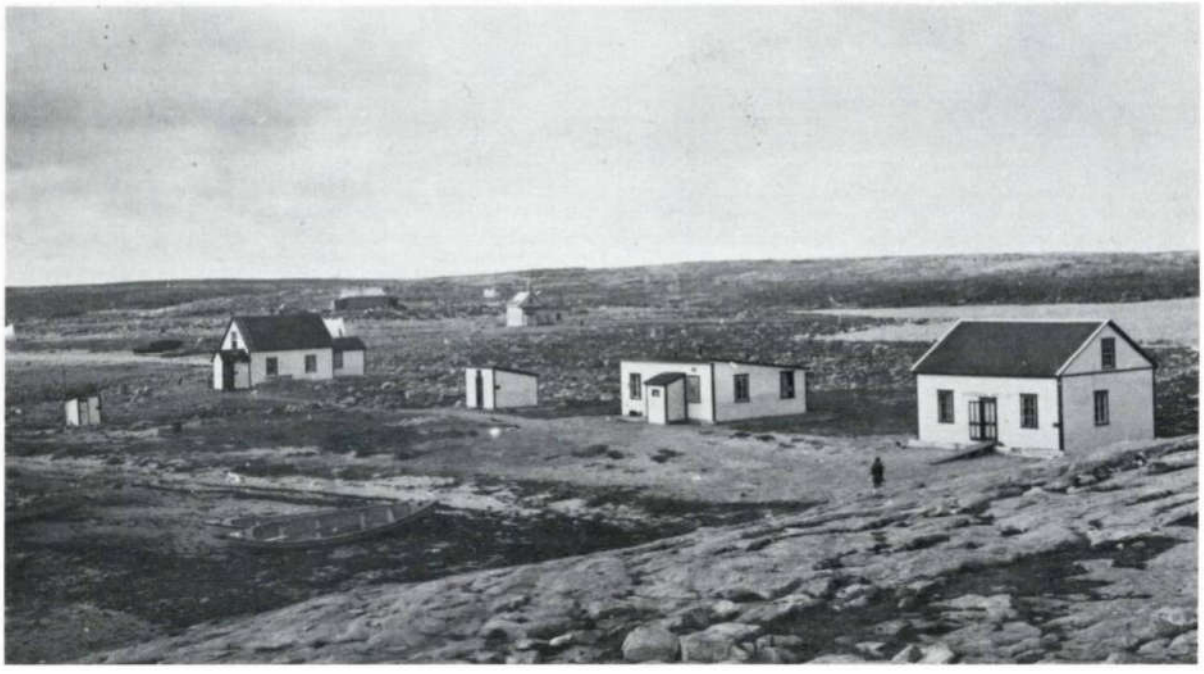
'Shall I go out and beat them up, Sergeant?' he asked me. 'If I do, you will charge me with assault so you had better investigate this yourself.' He added that he admired me as a policeman but he knew I would never have been able to handle a shanghaied crew on a whaling ship. I confronted the men, explained to them that they were in a foreign country, that they were breaking its laws and liable to imprisonment. Unless we came to some understanding, I warned them, we were in for long-drawn-out legal complications.

I then suggested that they all step down to the wharf and throw the revolvers that they were carrying out into deep water. They agreed and we came to an amicable agreement. No harm had been done but the

The scene aboard the 'Finback' as the ship prepares to leave New York harbour. The ship's engineer stands in the foreground.



The manager's house at Chesterfield Inlet (far left) as it was when Captain Comer, his engineer and mate, were lodged there.



WHALING MUSEUM, NEW BEDFORD

The crew of the 'Era' c.1900. Captain George Comer stands in the centre, back row. The Eskimo youngster with him is probably John Ell, who lived aboard the ship with his mother Shoofly.

possession of dangerous weapons by such an irresponsible group could not be tolerated.

The *Nascopie* arrived; Captain G. H. Mead was in charge and Captain E. Mack, a former master of the vessel, was acting as ice-master until Captain Mead gained more experience. Captain Comer was then able to get in touch with his owners in New York by short-wave radio. They instructed him to put the wrecked *Finback* up for sale by public auction.

Meanwhile I had to persuade Captain Mead to give the foreign seamen passage south. He agreed to take them as far as St John's, Newfoundland; this was the ship's last port of call before returning to her base at Ardrossan in Scotland. The ship, however, did not have sufficient passenger accommodation for Comer's seamen. They were given buckets and brooms and were ordered to clean out the sealers' quarters. This area of the ship was used when the *Nascopie* went out to the ice floes off Newfoundland to harvest young seals.

The accommodation did not please the seamen, and I was later told by Captain Mack that there had been trouble. When fighting broke out Mead (who had taken the precaution of breaking the points off the knives that all the seamen carried) ordered the men to line up on deck. He told them that disorderly conduct would not be tolerated on a British ship. Captain Comer again volunteered to rough up his crew, but his offer was declined. Comer satisfied himself with giving the men a tongue lashing, a performance in which he excelled. The trouble ended.

When I informed Captain Comer that passage had been arranged as far as St John's, Newfoundland, he was pleased.

'You know, Sergeant' he said, 'I've always wanted to see that city'. He then went on to tell me that once in a thick fog he came close to Newfoundland but that he had not taken the opportunity to visit St John's. When one had a shanghaied crew, he explained, it was a risk to enter any port before reaching the whaling grounds. He added that he did lose one of his crew in the waters off Newfoundland. The man jumped overboard and, I was astounded to learn, Comer made no attempt to lower a boat to save him. Comer reasoned that he had not told the man to jump overboard and his fate effectively persuaded others not to follow his example.

Stories about Comer, and other whaling masters, were always circulating in the north. One story dated back to 1903, when the first police detachment was established at Fullerton. A report came to Superintendent Moodie, the officer-in-charge, that an American sailor was being mistreated — actually

strung up by the thumbs — on a whaling ship in the harbour. This practice was not uncommon in the days of windships.

Moodie sent one of his men to inquire as to the truth of this allegation. The policeman was informed that he was aboard an American ship and what happened was no concern of the RNWMP. Moodie threatened to imprison the captain if this gross mistreatment of his crew did not cease, and reminded him that he was in Canadian waters. Another story from that same year, or the following, was that two seamen who were dissatisfied and causing trouble, got 'lost in a blizzard', although they had a guide and the ship's bosun with them on what they thought was the first stage of their journey to Chesterfield Inlet. These stories are not documented, but Moodie, in his report to RNWMP headquarters in 1903, mentioned that a complaint had been made by one of the crew of the *Era*, Comer's whaling ship of that year.

Although George Comer was harsh with his crew, he had a high regard for the Aivilik people. Their territory extended north from around Whale Point to Lyon's Inlet, where Comer did most of his whaling. He gave his Eskimo crews excellent training; the best of the Aivilik men steered the boats and harpooned the whales, while the regular white crew rowed the whale-boats. When the owners of the *Era* decided to discontinue whaling, because of the failure of the

The RNWMP building at Chesterfield Inlet, built as a warehouse but used by Sergeant Douglas to house the crew of the 'Finback'.

COLLECTION OF W. O. DOUGLAS

Eskimo families in the after cabin of the 'Era'. Comer employed about 70 Inuit at Fullerton in 1903.

WHALING MUSEUM, NEW BEDFORD

Captain Comer was sailing the waters west of Southampton Island when this photo of whale-boats was taken in 1903-04 by A. P. Low.

P. A. C.

market for baleen, Comer wrote to me and asked me to give the whale-boats and whaling gear he had left at Fullerton to his two principal Inuit men. They made good use of the boats and gear and I personally witnessed their killing of two whales within an hour.

Captain Comer frequently came into contact with the Sadlermiut as well but there is no evidence that he employed them with his Aivilik people. In 1910 he wrote a paper in which he described his meetings with the primitive Sadlermiut and published a map that is described in *Arctic Canada from the Air* as the 'most complete and roughly correct map of the island [Southampton], the result of visits to the area between 1896 and 1909.'

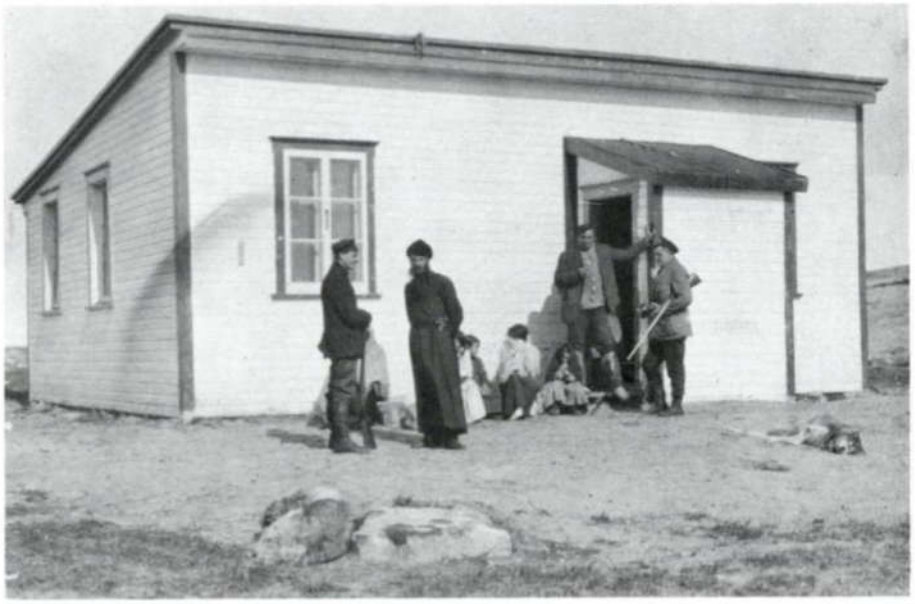
Knowing that the Sadlermiut people had been exterminated by disease in 1902-03, Captain Comer apparently attempted to colonize Southampton Island with his Aivilik people. Several families were landed at Cape Kendall, north and west of Bay of God's Mercy. The following year when Comer returned to trade produce and furs, the people told him that the area was unsatisfactory and that they were going to move to South Bay. Captain Toke Munn had established a small post on the island a few miles from the present Coral Harbour location, but he was an indifferent trader who spent most of his two years in travelling. After Munn's departure, Comer's Aivilik people remained on Southampton without any trading facilities. Occasionally they crossed to Repulse Bay when conditions were favourable.

The leader of the group was Oudlanak [John Ell], who had spent some years of his young life in Comer's vessel, the *Era*, with his mother, Shoofly. He had been named John Ell, or properly John L., by the sailors, all of whom greatly admired the heavyweight boxing champion John L. Sullivan.

After Comer received his instructions to put the *Finback* up for sale, he nailed the notice of a public auction on the door of the Hudson's Bay Company store. Out of curiosity I asked Comer privately what was included in the deal. 'Everything' he replied, 'the boats, all whaling gear and whatever cargo any prospective buyer can salvage from the wreck.' He thought the *Finback* might possibly be re-floated, but he doubted it.

The sale got under way. Captain Comer announced that he had been authorized by his New York owners to put the wrecked vessel up for sale at public auction. Only two half-spirited bidders came forward: Father Turquetil, O.M.I., of the Catholic mission, and Manager Solomon Ford of the Hudson's Bay Company. I was astounded at the low bids and bid a reckless three hundred and ninety dollars. Down came the hammer and I was the owner of a yacht. Unfortunately it was on a reef, eighty miles to the north. I still treasure the bill of sale since it bears the signatures of George Comer, E. Mack and G. H. Mead.

I sold the whale-boats for three times what I paid for them. I then engaged a group of Eskimos to go north and salvage what they could from the wreck. I am still convinced that, had I had the time, or someone who knew how to go about repairing a yacht, I would have had my vessel afloat again. As it was, the Eskimos had a great time, collecting their relatives on the way north and helping themselves to all the canned and other food that was stored, still undamaged, on the *Finback*. My 'employees' were so involved in opening cases to find out what was inside of them that they had little



Father Turquetil who bid on the 'Finback', with L. Ledingham, Chief Engineer (left) and Captain E. Mack (right) of the S.S. 'Nascopie'. In the background is the H B C warehouse at Chesterfield Inlet.

time left to look after my interests. However, they salvaged some deck equipment, whaling gear, and spare sails, and plumbing fixtures that I later found useful when I built the detachment at Chesterfield Inlet. There were two cases of well-oiled rifles, another of telescopes, and all the engine room tools.

I have often wondered if I was amply compensated for my investment in the wrecked *Finback* after I paid all the Eskimos. I never did set foot on my quarter-of-a-million-dollar yacht, but on one particularly calm day, at Fullerton, I leaned over the side of a whale-boat and I saw my 'investment' lying in deep water. It resembled a large white whale. An onshore wind with a heavy ocean swell had combined to push the damaged vessel off the reef and into deep water. Although she had a hole in the port bow, I have always believed that if I had had the time, and the proper equipment, I might have succeeded in beaching her and saving the last of the New England whaling ships to sail the waters of Hudson Bay.

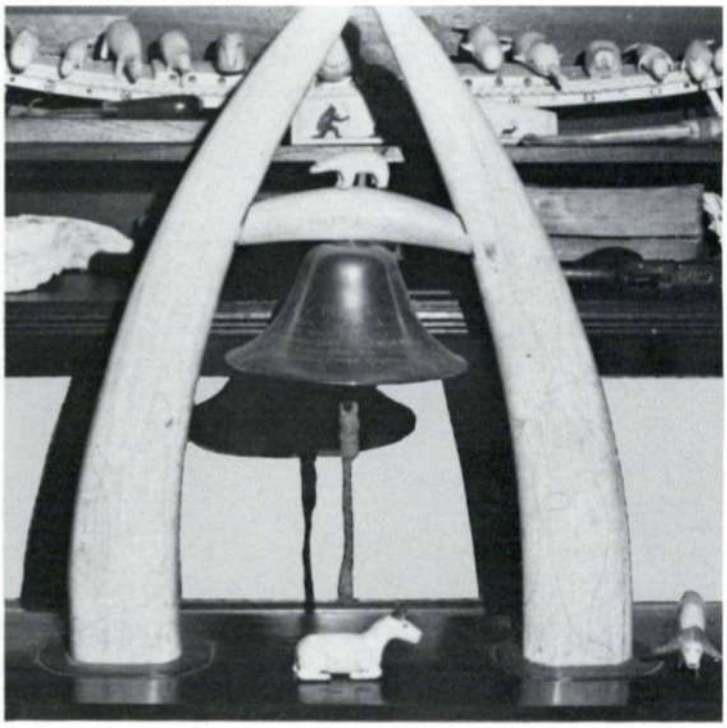
All was not lost however. Flagpoles made from the *Finback*'s booms and gaffs were erected at Chesterfield; the first was raised at the RNWMP detachment and the second was placed on Company land when I entered the service of the H B C. I had the ship's bell suspended between two fine walrus tusks and mounted on a hardwood base; this souvenir of the *Finback* is one of my proudest possessions.

My meeting with the shanghaied seamen was also a memorable experience. I interviewed them all, took their names, home addresses and next of kin. One fine-looking lad around 18 had two black eyes and some front teeth missing. I asked him what had happened; he refused to tell me, but another crewman volunteered the information. The young lad had apparently sneaked into the galley to make a snack. He heard Captain Comer coming but before he could escape the Captain had him in a stranglehold and was punching his face.

I gained more insight into Comer's methods of handling a crew when an Eskimo named Bye & Bye came to me with a boy who needed a tooth pulled. I had the equipment but I had never done an extraction. Bye & Bye, noting my reluctance, said 'Do it like Captain Comer used to do it for his crew.' He then explained that the 'black bosun' would force the man's mouth open with a belaying pin; then Comer would cut down the gum on either side of the tooth and flip it out, using a pocket-knife. In the case of my 'patient' however, the tooth was quite slack and easily removed by orthodox means.

After the auction, the list of items with the prices I received for them from the Hudson's Bay Company was sent to York Factory where Chris Harding, the Hudson's Bay District Manager, had his headquarters. When the winter mail packet arrived, it included an acknowledgement of my list of prices:

PHOTO BY RAYMOND BOULTON



The 'Finback's' bell, suspended between two walrus tusks and mounted on a hardwood base, a focus of interest in the Douglas home in Victoria.

another letter, signed by Mr Harding, suggested that I owed the Canadian government customs duty on the goods and that he, as Collector of Customs, would discuss this with me.

I was due to go out on leave and when I passed through York Factory the district accountant, in the absence of Mr Harding who had gone to Winnipeg on business, gave me a lecture about the customs. I refused to pay or to give a written acknowledgement that I owed money to the government. Then, in Ottawa I went to the Commissioner of Customs, and told him the whole story — the notice on the store door, and the public auction, and I showed him my bill of sale. His deputy was present at our interview and, while the Commissioner took me to lunch, the deputy went into the case. On our return he had his report ready and the Commissioner studied it carefully.

I would have no customs to pay, he informed me, since the vessel was a total wreck, abandoned by her captain and crew and submerged in water. He thanked me for bringing this matter to his attention and decided that henceforth the collection of customs would be done by the RNWMP from the Fort Nelson headquarters.

The purchase of the *Finback* was an unforgettable experience for me. It gave me the opportunity to meet Captain George Comer — the last of the New England whalers who had dominated whaling activities in Hudson Bay for many years. His crew was probably the last to be shanghaied to the Canadian Arctic. ◆

The Chinese Voyages of Angus Bethune

BY HILARY RUSSELL

The author is with the Research Division, National Historic Parks and Sites in Ottawa. She became interested in Angus Bethune in the course of her research on Dr Henry Norman Bethune and the Bethune Memorial house in Gravenhurst.

Quotations from the H B C Archives are made with permission of the Company.

MANY CANADIANS are aware of Dr Henry Norman Bethune (1890-1939) and his experiences in China. His biographers however do not indicate that he was the second in his family to visit China. Bethune's great-grandfather, Angus Bethune (1783-1858), made two trips to Canton on behalf of the North West Company between 1814 and 1816.

Angus Bethune's adventures in the celestial empire may have played no part in inspiring his great-grandson's voyage to China in 1938. Indeed, Dr Bethune may not even have heard about them. Nevertheless Angus's Pacific trading voyages constituted a significant episode in North West Company history, though the enterprise cannot be said to have been gloriously successful.

A number of important Nor'Westers had set their sights on expanding the Company's fur-trading activities to China some years before Angus's first voyage in 1814. In fact, the concern became peripherally involved in trans-Pacific trade before the turn of the century. As Sir Alexander Mackenzie wrote in his memoirs, 'a respectable house in London, half concerned with the North West Company' had sent furs to China through a trading house in New York between 1792 and 1797.

STATE OF HAWAII, PUBLIC ARCHIVES

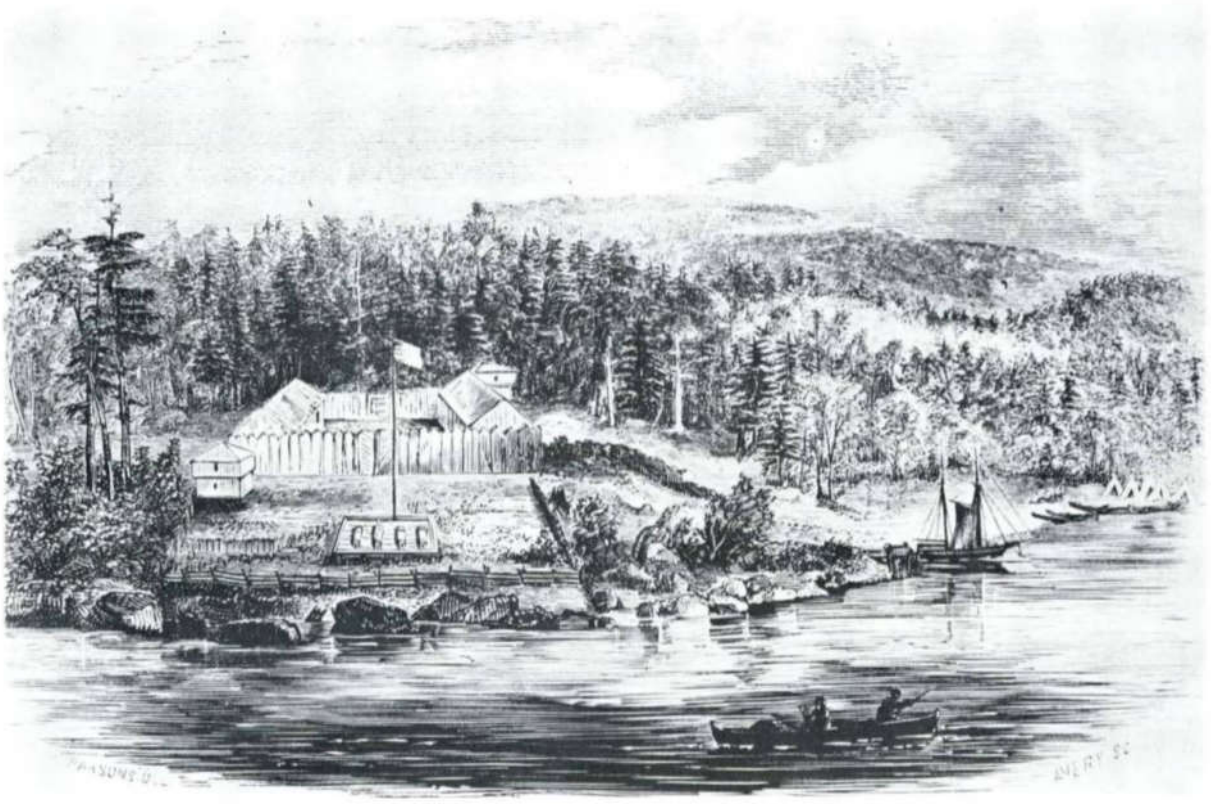
Peter Corney, first mate of the 'Columbia', who wrote a detailed personal account of the vessel's trading voyages to China. He later teamed up with a famous pirate and participated in a raid on Monterey. His portrait is owned by a descendant, Peter Breton of Devon, England.

At the 1811 meeting of North West Company partners at Fort William, a resolve was signed to establish trade 'from England, and China to the North West Coast of America — provided a suitable licence to that effect is obtained from the East India Company.'

In order to facilitate this trade, the North West Company required a post on the north-west coast; its partners considered that Astoria on the Columbia River, established in 1811 by John Jacob Astor's Pacific Fur Company, would do nicely.

The outbreak of the War of 1812 gave the Nor'Westers their opportunity; the British government succumbed to their entreaty that warships be sent with the Company's vessel to Astoria with the object of wresting the post from the American concern. The Company ship was the *Isaac Todd*, which was issued with a 'letter of marque' and fitted out in England to continue from the Columbia to Canton, China.

The 350-ton *Isaac Todd*, which would take Angus Bethune to China, had been built in Three Rivers, Quebec, in about 1811. She sailed in convoy from Portsmouth in March 1813, carrying North West Company partners John McDonald of Garth and



Astoria as it was when Angus Bethune arrived in October 1813.

Donald McTavish; twenty guns, and 'cannon balls enough for a line of battle ship.' Strangely enough, also in the convoy crossing the Atlantic was an Astor-owned brig, the *Forester*, which intended to supply the Astorians and possibly to thwart the object of the convoy's mission.

The *Isaac Todd* did not arrive at the Columbia until thirteen months after leaving England, having suffered a disastrous voyage. She had been beset by a press gang in Portsmouth; violent storms, the loss of her convoy, an inadequate water supply, scurvy and desertion had plagued her passage. The only respite in the gloomy saga of the journey was the presence on board of Jane Barnes, a Portsmouth barmaid who had been employed by McDonald (and the Company) at 30 pounds sterling yearly 'to do any Needlework that may be required on the passage and elsewhere when nothing occurs to prevent such.'

By the time the *Isaac Todd* arrived in April 1814, the post was in the North West Company's hands. It had been purchased from the Astorians in October 1813, and ritualistically captured and renamed Fort George in December by the captain of the *Raccoon*, the first ship of the convoy to arrive.

Angus Bethune, then a clerk in the Company, had reached Astoria with John George McTavish in October 1813, and had witnessed the bill of sale. He had been selected as the Company's representative in the adventure to China several months before. William McGillivray had informed John George McTavish in a letter dated 9 May 1813:

> In the memorandum — or instructions sent to Mr. [Donald] McTavish & Mr. [John] McDonald — Mr. Bethune is named as the Person to go to China to learn the business & act as supercargo — I considered that by your going which was my first Intention you would be somewhat detached from the Trade & my wish is that you should be considered as the most instrumental in Establishing the Business on a proper & permanent footing in the Interior which is of the first importance. — The stake is very considerable — The ships outfit has cost £40,000 stg. equal to 'one third' of all the NW outfits of the year.

McGillivray had second thoughts about the wisdom of entrusting Bethune with this expensive enterprise after ex-Astorian Duncan McDougall had rejoined the North West Company. McGillivray wrote to McTavish in July 1814:

> I am persuaded that Mr. McDougalls experience will be of Essential service to the Department . . . and he must from the knowledge he has acquired in his late concern be much more fitted for China than Mr. Bethune — it is now too late to make this remark.

Still, some prominent Nor'Westers must have thought quite highly of Bethune's abilities, and he became a North West Company partner by a resolve of the 1814 meeting at Fort William. He was then thirty years old.

Bethune himself may have been apprehensive about the prospects of the enterprise, as difficulties continued to plague the *Isaac Todd*. On the voyage to the Columbia there had been much dissension between those on board. In John McDonald's estimate, the vessel was 'a miserable sailor, with a miserable commander, a rascally crew, and three mates, called first, second, third officers.' Donald McTavish was vastly unpopular with the sailors, and neither he nor the first mate had messed with Captain Fraser Smith. At the Columbia animosities persisted, and Smith rejected the repeated entreaties of the fur traders that he anchor 'under' the fort. The refusal ultimately had tragic consequences. In May, Donald McTavish and Alexander Henry were drowned on their way out to the *Isaac Todd* in an open boat.

The Captain was blamed for their deaths by at least one Nor'Wester who wrote of 'the rascally infamous conduct of Capt. Smith to whom the sad catastrophy may be attributed besides the other series of disappointments which attended the Isaac Todd all along. God send poor Bethune a safe passage in her — He has much to fear.'

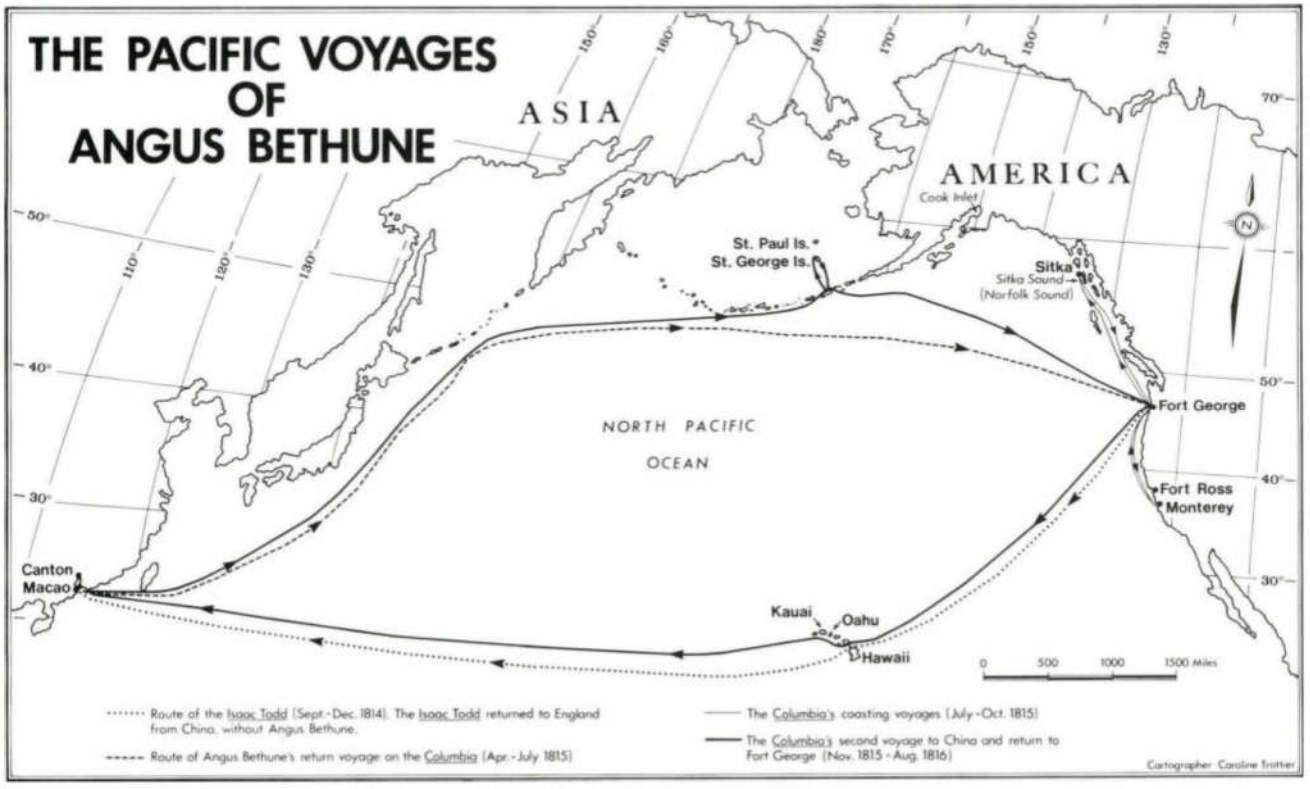
A second Company vessel fitted out in England for the trans-Pacific and coasting trade, the 185-ton *Columbia*, arrived at Fort George on 7 July 1814, and anchored beside the *Isaac Todd*. Luckily for historians, Peter Corney was the *Columbia*'s first mate, and he later wrote the only detailed personal narrative so far located of the North West Company's eastern adventure.

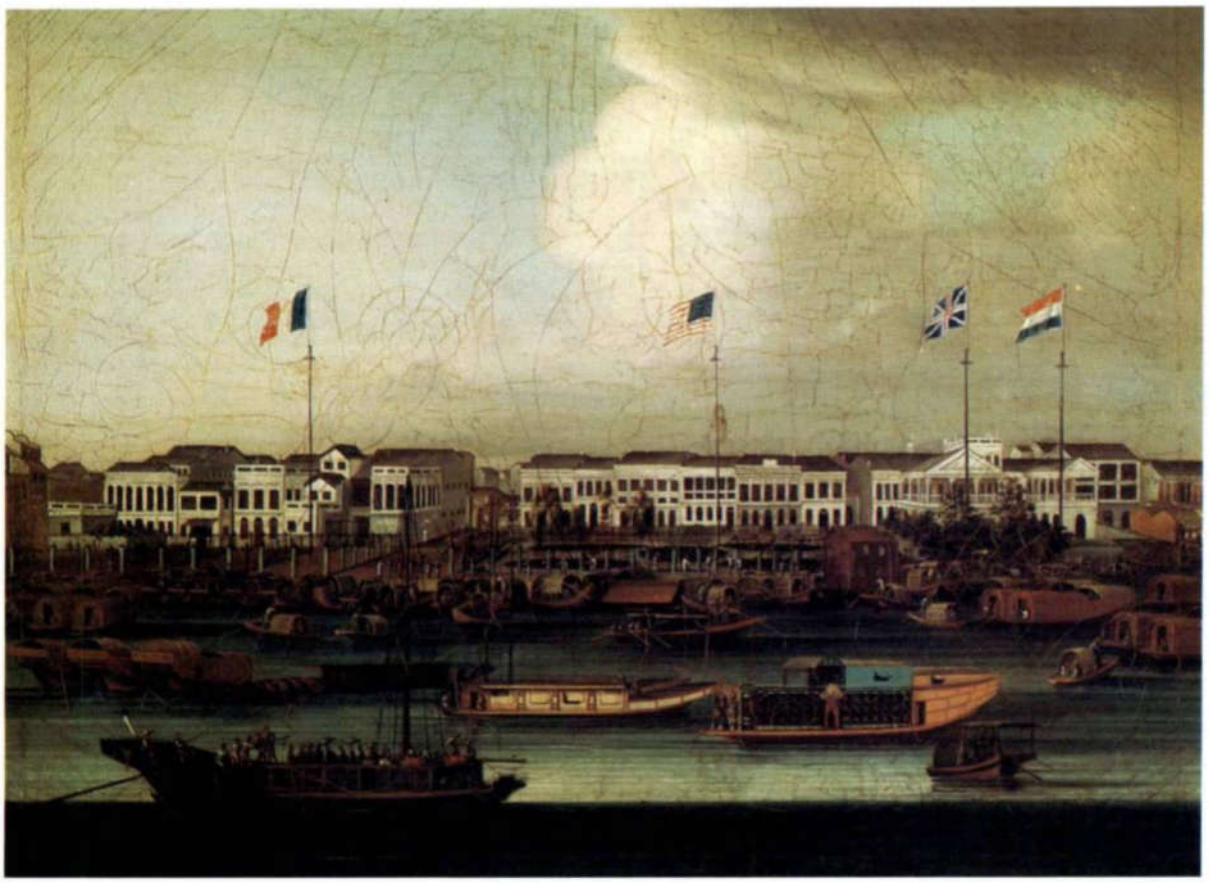
In Corney's account, 'the *Isaac Todd* had been taking on furs for China; on the 22nd of July, she was ready for sea, and dropped down below the Point. Mr. Bethune, one of the Northwest Company, went on board as supercargo for China.' According to Ross Cox, a clerk at Fort George who published his memoirs in 1831, Jane Barnes was also on board. The *Isaac Todd's* departure was prolonged; she did not leave the river until 26 September.

On the voyage to China the *Isaac Todd* was 'manned with Sandwich Islanders' taken on at Fort George. These crew members shortly saw their homeland again when the ship stopped at Hawaii for fresh provisions. There, Bethune encountered and gave passage to John Jennings, ex-captain of the Astor ship *Forester*. He had narrowly escaped being lynched by his crew and had been left on the island.

The *Isaac Todd* left Hawaii for the Macao Roads, where a pilot and a mandarin pass permitting her to go upriver to Whampoa were secured. The ship anchored at Whampoa, and there commercial transactions began. According to the procedure required for all foreign vessels trading in China, the cargo was ferried twelve miles to Canton in chop boats.

Before the hatches of a foreign vessel could be opened, the superintendent of customs or his representative calculated the tonnage duties due. This





PEABODY MUSEUM OF SALEM. PHOTO BY MARK SEXTON

The Canton factories, China. By an unidentified Chinese artist, c.1800.

was done by multiplying the length of the ship by the breadth amidships (in a Chinese unit equal to 14.1 inches) and dividing the product by 10. This figure was paid in taels, one of which equalled about 1.4 dollars. In addition, a standard charge of 1950 taels was exacted for 'cumsha' — presents — which were distributed to the Emperor, his officials and soldiers, and the 'poor'. These sums were paid through a Chinese security merchant, who was authorized to trade with foreigners and who was responsible for the conduct of the ship. The supercargo was obliged to transact all business through the security merchant and linguist. The latter was licensed and appointed by the superintendent of customs, as were the 'tidewaiters' who watched the ship to prevent smuggling. The compradore supplied the ship with non-trade articles, and, by 1814, he bought this right and his services were imposed on the ship. Trading in China was thus a complicated and regulated business, and an effective supercargo was required to have the mental abilities of a banker and a diplomat and the courage to resist extortionate demands.

Angus Bethune may not have been free to trade with the security merchant as other supercargoes were. The *Isaac Todd* was under licence to the East India Company, and such Company licences 'contained galling provisions entitling it to supervise the voyage, the conduct of the crew, and the sale of furs.'

A North West Company account book lists the following skins shipped to China 'for' the *Isaac Todd*, spring 1814: 3570 large and small beaver, 260 beaver coating, 13554 muskrats, 93 fine otters, 154 'fishirs', 48 cats, 27 martins, 320 minks, 7 red and cross foxes, 16 'swanskins' and 70 large cub bears. Some of the skins ended up in India, as it was noted later in the accounts that $280 duty was paid on 66 bearskins 'sent to India p. Capt. Graham for Outfit 1813.' Another entry dated November 1814 states that the furs the *Isaac Todd* carried from the Columbia were insured at the value of 28,000 pounds, whereas the ship was valued at 5,000. In exchange for these skins, Bethune is said to have secured a lading of tea which the *Isaac Todd* took to England 'for account of the East India Company.'

William McGillivray was dissatisfied with the venture and wrote to John George McTavish in June 1815:

> You will see the statement of account regarding the adventure of the Isaac Todd — nearly £15000 is wrote off for the loss — it would have been much more but for the Profits which have been put on the skins bought from the agents of Mr. Astor — The ship and cargo is still

the Property of NWCo. 1813 but if she makes a good freight to England & that the skins sell for anything decent — I should hope some part of the above loss may yet be recovered — but this is extremely uncertain for it seems the prices of skins had fallen on the Canton market. The skins by the Isaac Todd were not yet sold the 17th of January though they had been at Canton about a month.

Bethune did not go to England on the *Isaac Todd*, but waited in China with Captain Jennings and sixteen Sandwich Islanders for the arrival of the *Columbia*. Between 12 January and 27 April 1815, Bethune charged sundry expenses totalling $130.57 to the North West Company. Included were the following: $5.75 for a barber, $24 for a servant, $12 for a washerwoman, $7 for a mattress, and assorted charges for 6 pairs of cotton stockings, 3 pairs of shoes, a pair of Nankeen trousers, a looking glass '& blk Ball', 24 buttons, 3 yards of blue cloth, an umbrella, a toothbrush, a pair of razors, soap, and a 'trunk for papers'. The Company paid considerably more than this for his sojourn. His board and other living expenses not included above totalled about $500. As a point of comparison, the Company paid $91 for the board of the sixteen Sandwich Islanders 'after the sailing of the Isaac Todd, one month'.

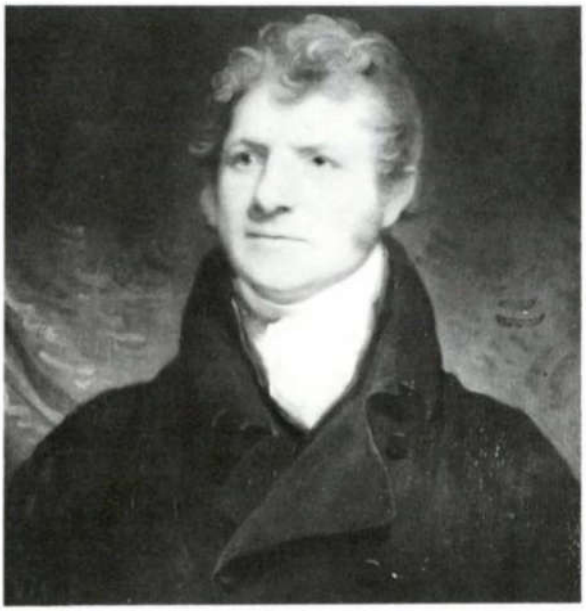
The *Columbia* arrived in China in March 1815. Captained by Anthony Robson, she had made a trading voyage to Norfolk Sound (in Russian America) the previous autumn, returned to Fort George, and sailed for the Orient in November 1814, stopping at Monterey, Fort Ross and Hawaii.

It seems that Jane Barnes was a passenger on the *Columbia*'s trip to China, though Corney does not say so explicitly. On 10 March, from the Macao Roads, Captain Robson 'took the young woman on shore, the Chinese not allowing her to proceed to Canton in the schooner.' This was no reflection on Jane personally; western women were restricted to Macao before the 1830s. In a possible attempt to shield Jane's identity, an entry in the Company's account book of the voyage reads:

	to cash on Acct. of James [?] Barnes	
Apr. 11	to duty paid for landing him at Macao	$9
	to Sundries & Capt. Robson for cloathing etc.	75
	to board for 24 days	110
	to Boat hire for Capt. Robson from Canton to Macao	71
May 2	Paid his board ac. as pr. draft from Capt. Robson	95.50
		360.50
	exchange 20 p.c.	72.10
		432.60

The peculiar insistence upon the gender of this person makes the record more suspect.

The *Columbia* remained at Macao for a week. Among expenses incurred as a result was $48 'for sending for letters on board the Schooner Columbia while detained at Macao for a pilot' (surely a heavy charge), and a $29.50 bill at 'Macao Tavern.' She finally anchored at Whampoa on 20 March.

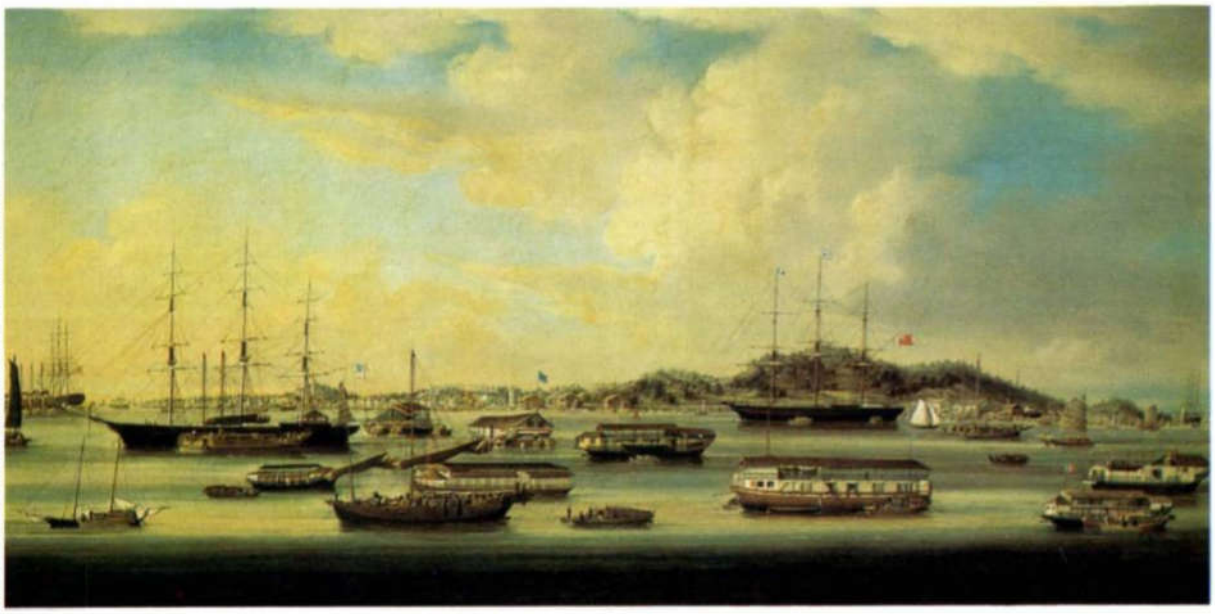


William McGillivray of the North West Company who was concerned about the Company's costly trade missions to China.

According to Corney, Robson found that Bethune wanted to hire Captain Jennings in his place. Captain Robson was given $2,000 plus $50 exchange to meet his expenses in returning to England. Corney wrote 'On 28 March, 1815, being quite tired of the northwest coast of America, and determined to go to England, he [Robson] gave charge of the schooner to Captain Jennings, agreeably to an order from Mr. Bethune.'

The *Columbia* was not destined for England. If Robson knew this, he may have decided to leave his ship before he met Bethune and Jennings. He had promised earlier, according to John McDonald, to take Jane Barnes (whom he later married) to England 'free of any charges'. (The termination of Jane's employment with the Company was agreeable to both parties; Jane had proved to be an 'unfit' seamstress, and she had 'expressed a wish' to return to England. She was given 30 pounds 'as a compensation' by James McTavish.)

In spite of these understandings and payments, when Robson reached England (nearly a year later), he complained to Inglis, Ellice & Co. of ill-treatment from North West Company representatives and, in his accounts, presented a bill of £717.12/— to cover 'the expenses and passage of a female home from China.' The female, of course, was the intrepid and expensive Jane Barnes. The London Company was sympathetic to her, writing to Sir Alexander Mackenzie & Co., 'the poor woman desires to know where & to whom to apply for the annuity promised her' and supporting Robson's claim of maltreatment. The letter noted 'the desire expressed by your super cargo at Canton to



PEABODY MUSEUM OF SALEM: PHOTO BY MARK SEXTON

All foreign vessels trading in China anchored at Whampoa, above. Their cargo was ferried from here to Canton in chop boats. By an unidentified Chinese artist.

employ Capt. Jennings in his place' and later continued:

> If little jealousies & want of confidence in those upon whom you must depend for the performance of essential services, are to continue to characterize the conduct of your agents at the Columbia, it is unless [useless] to expect any cordial exertions on the part of respectable ship-masters who can not be expected to consider themselves as inferiors to those, who, not otherwise from their situations command respect.

Bethune, no doubt, was included in this indictment, although the letter also referred to the treatment Robson had experienced 'on the coast'. Captain Fraser Smith's disaffections must have been communicated to the London agents also, for they warned that unless the next captain of the North West Company vessel encountered 'a more grateful response' the venture 'will terminate as little to the satisfaction of both parties as those which have preceded in the Isaac Tod, & the Columbia.'

There were other difficulties connected with the *Columbia*'s trade. Entries in the Company's 1815 accounts reveal the payment of excessive fees and duties (unless some of these were incurred by the *Isaac Todd*), as well as an explicit bribe. Linguist's fees, tonnage duties and cumsha totalling $3,246 were registered on April 28. Later on in the same account, more duties, measurement charges and linguist's fees were listed (amounting to $2,076.50), together with $60 'paid Tide Waiters for Smuggling window glass — the duties thereon amounting to a prohibition.'

The Selkirk Papers contain a list of skins labelled 'Canton Sales — 1815' totalling $101,155.40. These may embody the *Columbia*'s cargo, or may include at least some of that of the *Isaac Todd*. Among them were '2,1000' musquatch, 1,300 common land otters, 155 sea otters and 88 sea otter tails, 21,234 beavers, and 3,439 fur seal skins. Somehow, the *Columbia* managed to evade some of the restrictions which had hampered the *Isaac Todd*'s trade, and these skins did not have to be traded for tea destined for England.

In the Company accounts, a long list of articles is titled 'Invoice of Sundries shipped on board the Schooner Columbia intended for Fort George outfit 1815.' In the inventory are: fine calicoes, petticoat slips, silk and cotton handkerchiefs and stockings, silk hats, yellow and blue beads, soup plates, 'shallow plates', cups and saucers, breakfast sets, water jugs and chamber pots, velvet, sewing silk, ribbon, nankeen jackets, shirts and trousers, blue silk coats, umbrellas, sweetmeats, jellies, molasses, brown and 'candid' sugar, rice, and Hyson, Souchong and Gunpowder teas. Two boxes of fireworks were also listed. It is likely that these were bought for the compradore to set off for luck as the vessel departed Whampoa. (This was a Chinese tradition.) Among other foodstuffs, the compradore supplied the ship with sweet potatoes, 'European' potatoes, ducks, hogs, raisins, 'corn sugar', ketchup, greens, fowls, oranges, 42½ dozen eggs, and 139 loaves of bread.

The *Columbia* weighed anchor on the 28th of April; five of the Sandwich Islanders died soon after. She lost another hand on 17 May, when seaman Joseph Ashton 'suddenly gave three Indian yells and leaped from the lee-bow into the sea, where he was drowned'. The passage was marked by variable winds and much bad weather; the schooner crossed the bar of the Columbia River on 1 July 1815.

Some time later John Haldane wrote to James Leith 'Bethune is returned from China where he sold his furs, but not a flattering price.' Though the reference could be to the *Isaac Todd*'s cargo, possibly the *Columbia*'s adventure had been equally disappointing.

Notwithstanding, after a brief stay at Fort George, Angus Bethune and the *Columbia* departed for Monterey, arriving in about the middle of July. There deserters from the *Isaac Todd* and the *Columbia* were retrieved, and food and tallow were taken on board. (In the California State Archives there is a letter from Angus dated 18 July to the Spanish Governor of California thanking him for provisions furnished.) Though Corney did not say so, it seems that Chinese articles were delivered to officers of the presidio. Through Bethune, McDougall must have ordered the following articles which were 'shipped on board the schooner Columbia intended for California' : imitation madras, silk hats, velveteen, cotton hose, blue nankeens, ribbons, sewing thread and silk, Canton cloth, and 12 pairs of 'sandles'. Designated for 'Don Maria' were artificial flowers, Irish linen, stockings, Canton cloth, two pairs of boots, and other items. 'Don Maria' likely was the commandante of the presidio at Monterey, Don José Estudillio.

From Monterey, the schooner returned to the Columbia, speedily discharged the cargo, and took on board a fresh one for Norfolk Sound. She sailed on 16 September. On the way, a small rebellion by the crew, motivated by their allegedly scanty provisions, was suppressed. Corney thought that their complaints were baseless, as 'their allowance was five pounds of bread, three pounds of pork, six pounds of beef, and two and one-fourth pounds of flour per week, with peas and beans; tea morning and evening, and a quarter of a pint of rum per day.'

The trade with the Russians passed uneventfully. From American ships at Norfolk Sound, the men of the *Columbia* learned that the war with America was over. Corney continued,

> On the 25th of October, we again entered the River Columbia, and sent the furs on shore to be re-packed. In November, nine bark canoes arrived with furs from the interior; on the 10th we received our cargo on board with stores, etc., and on the 13th made sail for the Sandwich Islands.

Bethune and the *Columbia* had begun their second trip to China. They reached the island of Hawaii in early December. Supplies were obtained, and King Kamehameha I came on board with 'the gentlemen' left there on the *Columbia*'s previous voyage. The two 'had been well treated by the natives and wanted for nothing.' The vessel was similarly welcome; she received daily visits from royalty, and her decks were 'crowded with natives'.

The *Columbia* stopped at two other islands. At Oahu, she was caulked and painted and her rigging overhauled. There the natives were friendlier than ever, and the practice was developed of firing muskets at sundown and sunrise as signals for women to board and leave the ship. The vessel departed for Kaui, where natives brought hogs, goats, and vegetables to barter.

This scene near Monterey, California, was done by Richard B. Beechy in 1826, a decade after the consignment of Chinese wine glasses, beads, plates, and chamber pots was delivered by Bethune.

BANCROFT LIBRARY, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

On the 4th of January, 1816, the *Columbia* departed for China, arriving on 11 February. Here ensued Corney's only descriptive passage on being in China:

> The grand mandarin came on board to measure the vessel, and made the usual present of two lean bullocks, ten jars of sour stuff misnamed wine, and ten bags of something they call flour; they were not worth the trouble of taking on board, and I sold them to the compradore for two dozen geese.

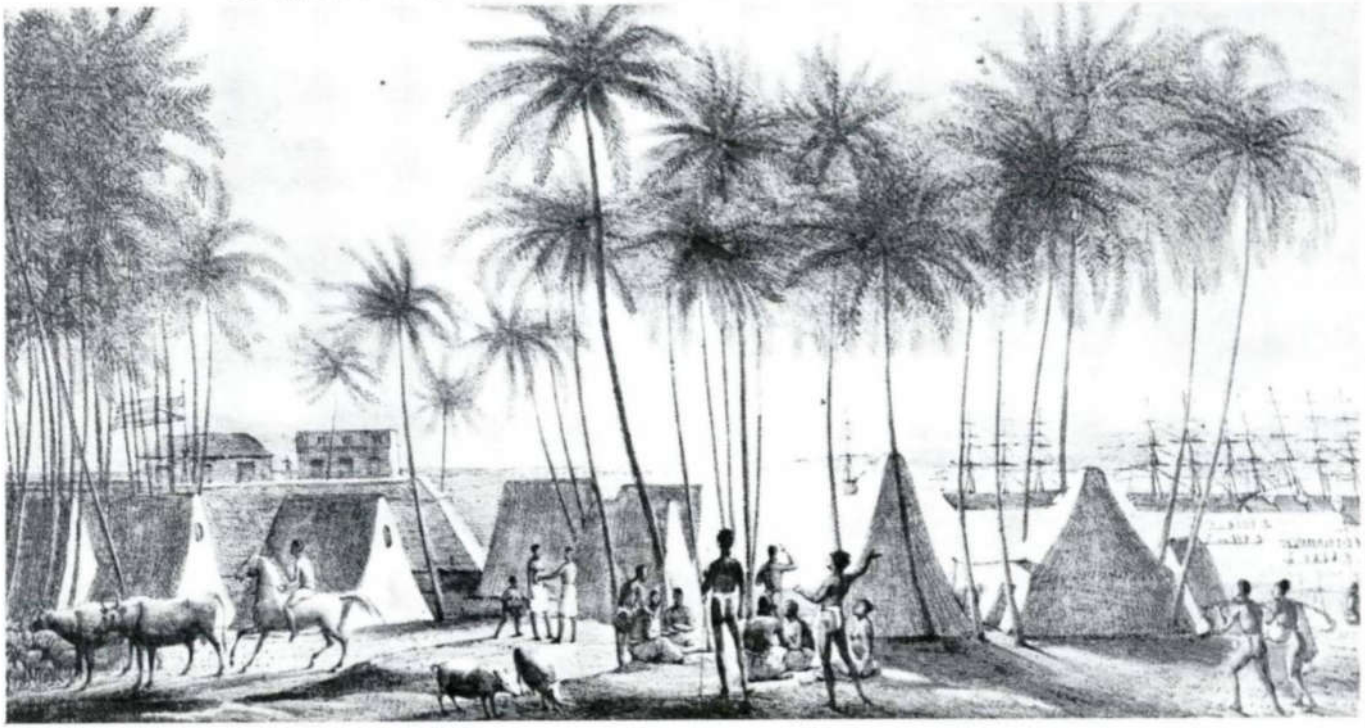
The ship remained in China for nearly two months. It appears that while there she had to replace over half her crew, though Corney makes no reference to this. In North West Company accounts 'Adventure to the Columbia, 1815: Portage Bill of Schooner Columbia' the officers and crew of the ship are named, together with columns labelled 'time of entry', 'paid off', 'time served', and 'wages'. The last column is titled 'whither gone'. Here it is registered that five crew members 'entered Portuguese service', two had 'gone to England', three had 'gone to Amsterdam, S. Isabella', two had gone to India, and four had been impressed by H.M.S. *Horatio*. All these departed men were paid off in February 1816, while the *Columbia* was still in China.

The ship seems to have undergone substantial refitting in China, according to a Company account titled 'Adventure to the Columbia, 1816. For sundry disbursements in Canton for Schooner Columbia'. Included in the list of sail needles, 'European rigging', casks, tar, rope, hinges, and so on, were '50 Sky rockets' at $6, 1 'sofa drawers and stand' for $25, 8½ yards of carpeting for $12.75, '1 boat and sails,

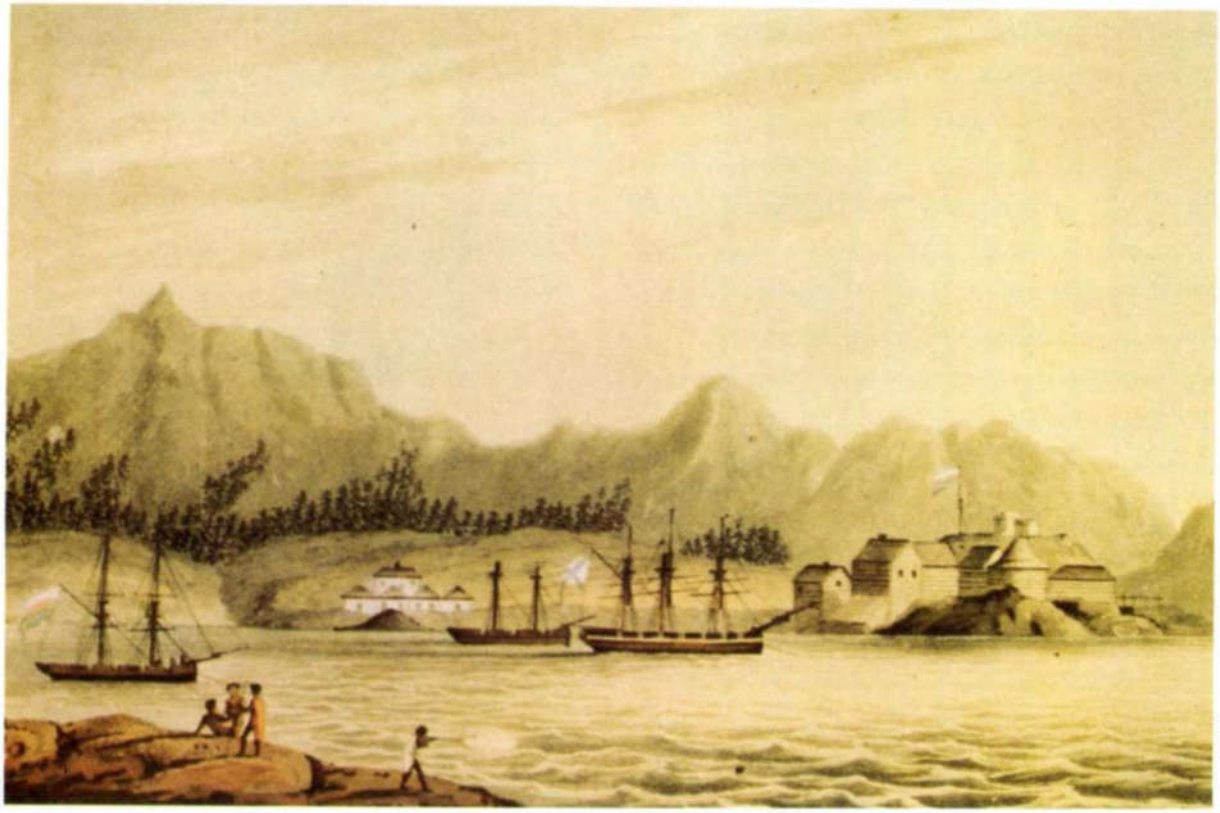
King Kamehameha I who bought the 'Columbia' in 1818 for two shiploads of sandalwood and a quantity of provisions.

STATE OF HAWAII, PUBLIC ARCHIVES

Honolulu at the time of the Bethune's visits. The 'Columbia' was welcomed at the Hawaiian Islands.



This view of the harbour at Norfolk Sound (Sitka) was drawn by Captain Lisiansky sometime between 1800 and 1830.



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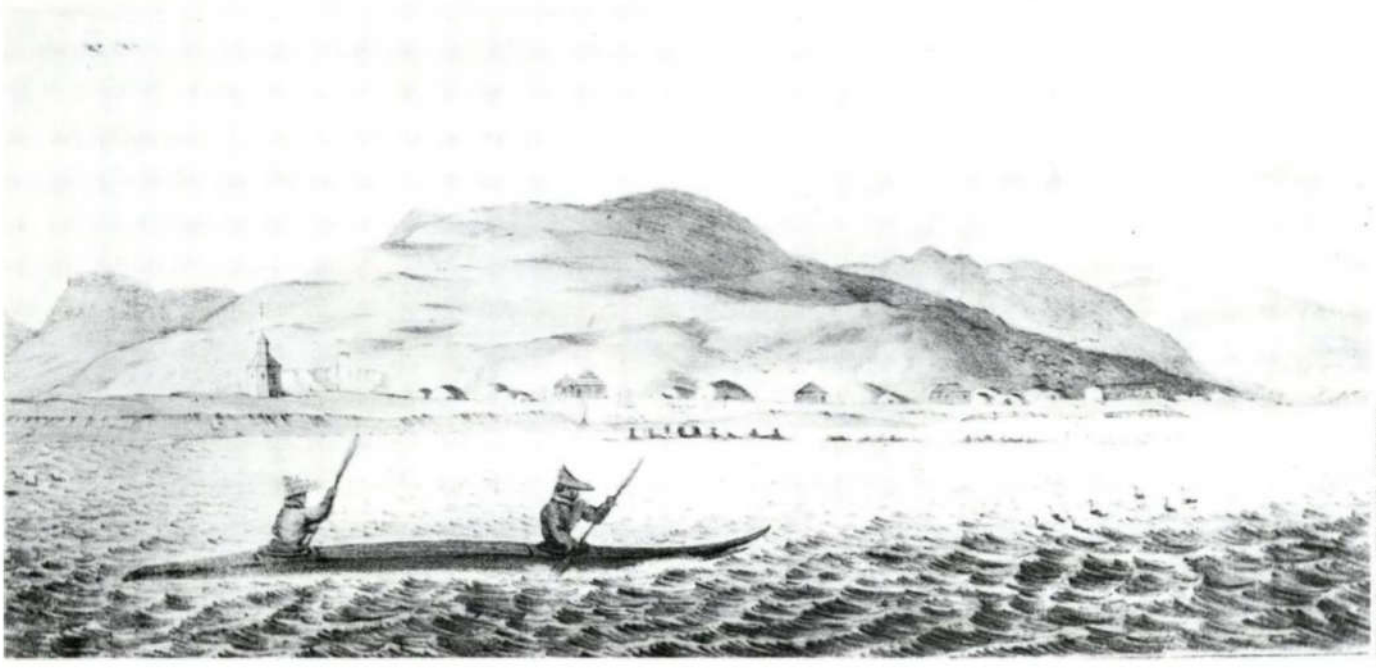
Unalaska in 1817, a year after the 'Columbia' stopped at the Aleutians to take on bales of fur-seal skins, gulls' eggs and young sea lions — 'very good eating'.



PROVINCIAL ARCHIVES, VICTORIA

complete', at $300, and a small boat with oars for $20. Also purchased were an Azimuth compass for $30 and a 'spy glass' for $20. A 'speaking trumpet' and 'the cook's ladle' were repaired. Altogether, the bill for the ship and its stores amounted to over $4,000. Among stores taken on between 15 February and 25 April were lychees, grass, oysters, fish sauce, curry, and arrack.

In an inventory of sundries shipped by Angus Bethune to Fort George and 'consigned to the proprietors or representatives of that concern' was $308 worth of gold lace, 'gold for ladies sandles', gold thread, gold fringe and gold-embroidered damask, six boxes of artificial flowers, one bottle essence of peppermint, 12 bottles of cream of tartar, and three boxes of window glass. (This shipment may have been ultimately destined for California.)

To 'Don Jose Maria Estardello' was shipped, among other things, tumblers, wineglasses, an eight-day clock, foolscap paper, an assortment of nankeens and other dry goods, beads, plates, and chamber pots. Another consignment shipped 'by A. Bethune' for Norfolk Sound contained cotton and black silk handkerchiefs worth $1,200, blue nankeens at $5,000, and thirty gallons of 'Teneriffe' wine. The shipment may have been destined for Governor Alexander Baranoff of the Russian American Fur Company. The commandante at Monterey and the Governor may have contracted to sell these items, the North West Company receiving a five per cent commission and possibly some amount for freight. Baranoff had made such arrangements earlier with Astor vessels, and the procedure was spelled out in an 1816 'Account of Sundries left at Monterry by Duncan McDougall in charge of Don Jose Maria Estudellato'.

The *Columbia* left Macao on 30 April 1816, and headed for the Aleutians; her passage was the 'quickest ever made' in Corney's opinion. The schooner stopped briefly at St. George Island, the 'cargo' was taken ashore and she took on 313 bales of fur seal skins, as well as plenty of gulls' eggs, salted ducks, and a number of young sea lions which, Corney remarked, 'we found very good eating'. At Unalaska 'Captain Jennings and the gentlemen [Bethune and McLennan?] accompanied the governor [McDougall] on shore; they took some rum with them to treat the Russians'. Corney had noted earlier in his narrative that the Russians were 'extremely fond' of that libation, and would 'part with anything' for it. On 29 July the vessel sailed 'towards Cook's Straits' and reached Fort George in August.

Bethune's days of trading with Russians, Chinese and Spaniards were over. His voyages in North West Company vessels failed to satisfy McGillivray, who wrote in June 1815, 'I am in hopes of fixing [?] a link of our chain in New York — without which our consignments to China can never be turned to the best advantage.' In that year, the Company contracted with the Boston firm of Perkins and Company to carry on its China trade from the Columbia. Not only was the East India Company's monopoly a problem for British subjects, but in explaining the new arrangement in April 1816 McGillivray wrote:

> The expense attending the sending [of] our own vessels to China is too heavy — and the Partners of the North West Company do not understand the management of ships or captains; collecting and trading skins is their real business.

Since Smith and Robson had unpleasant experiences with some of the partners on the coast, McGillivray may not have been particularly thinking of the Company's supercargo when he wrote this, though it sounds as if he were. Whether more profits were realized by sending furs to China in Boston ships has not been determined.

What became of the principal characters and vessels in this account? The *Columbia* engaged in a few more trading voyages, revisiting the Sandwich Islands and the Russian settlements (though not China). She was sold in May 1818 to King Kamehameha I for two ship-loads of sandalwood and a quantity of provisions. A few months later, Peter Corney took up with a celebrated pirate, Hypolite Bouchard, and participated in a raid on Monterey. He soon became tired of plundering and returned to England, where he published his memoirs in the *London Literary Gazette*. Corney reverted to the northwest coast and to the fur trade by 1830, this time in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company. He is said to have been an officer on the Company vessels *Eagle* and *Columbia*.

Jane Barnes did not marry an East India Company nabob and live happily and luxuriously ever after in Canton, as Clerk Ross Cox reported in his book *'Adventures on the Columbia . . .'* published in London, 1831. She married Captain Robson, and, to the amazement of the fur traders at Fort George, the couple and their two children appeared there in June 1818 in a brig owned by Robson, yet another vessel named *Columbia*. He had brought some welcome supplies from England, and planned to 'continue trading on the coast'.

Angus Bethune became the co-leader or spokesman for the cause of the rebellious wintering partners of the North West Company, returning to sea in 1820 to pursue negotiations with the Hudson's Bay Company in London. He was appointed a chief factor of the Hudson's Bay Company by the terms of the coalition agreement of 1821. On occasion, he may have entertained colleagues at his subsequent postings to Moose Factory, Albany, Sault Ste Marie, Michipicoten and La Cloche with tales of his adventures: trading for silks, gold lace, and artificial flowers; eating gulls' eggs and young sea lions, and dealing in exotic empires with Russian and Spanish governors, Hawaiian royalty, and officials of the Emperor of China. ◆

THE FISHING BEARS

By Fred Bruemmer

A successful bear carries a salmon ashore to eat it.

Fred Bruemmer has photographed and written about the Arctic for fourteen years. His publications include the impressive and beautiful 'Seasons of the Eskimos' and 'Encounters with Arctic Animals'.

EACH YEAR AS SALMON ASCEND the rivers of British Columbia and Alaska to spawn, furry fishermen await their coming. Black bears and Alaska's giant brown or Kodiak bears, congregate at favoured spots to intercept the migrating fish. The best place, perhaps, attracting the largest concentration of brown bears, is McNeil River Falls on the Alaska Peninsula.

The river rushes down from the snow-glittering mountains that rise in the haze-blue distance and then, still fast and crystal clear, meanders through a wide valley. Great meadows with hip-high grass stretch out on either side; the white umbels of wild parsnip nod in the breeze. Alder and willow thickets flank the river and the valley slopes are purple and blue with fireweed and lupine.

Near the sea, the river has cut its way through a broad rock ledge, and slips down in a series of white-foaming channels and riffles to the deep pools and eddies below. Here the salmon mass, sometimes in shoals so dense they seem to form a solid layer. To their powerful sculling fins, the rushing water is a trifling obstacle. But they hesitate; their acute senses tell them that death waits at the falls. As many as twenty brown bears, the world's largest carnivores, may stand in or near the water, poised to pounce on any passing fish.

By inclination, brown bears are loners. For much of the year they roam the wilds, solitary and sour-tempered. At the falls these grouchy individualists must somehow get along. If they were to spend all their time fighting, their fishing success would seriously suffer, and the six-week mid-summer salmon feast is extremely important to the bears. They round out visibly on this rich diet, accumulating the vital layer of fat that will sustain them during the foodless months of hibernation.

A sort of touchy truce is established at the falls by adherence to a strict order of precedence. At the head of this hierarchy are the strongest males, mighty despots weighing well over a thousand pounds. Early

At the McNeil River Falls, bears gather from far and wide to intercept migrating salmon.

in the season, a certain amount of fighting, and a tremendous amount of sparring, roaring and bluffing goes on, until it has been fairly clearly established who can beat whom. The strongest get the best fishing places. Those beneath them in hierarchical standing have to be content with inferior spots. When a great male arrives and finds his place occupied by another bear, he marches in with ponderous assurance; the usurper slinks off and finds someone lower whom he in turn can displace.

To avoid conflict, bears go through quite an elaborate ritual, communicating their intentions by what might be called 'body language'. If, for instance, a weaker bear has to pass a stronger one to reach his own fishing place, he sidles sideways, ever so slowly and cautiously, past his superior, eyes averted, head lowered, meek and humble. It is quite a tricky manoeuvre, for each bear has his individual distance, a space around himself considered inviolable. Even the meekest slinker, signalling PEACE as explicitly as he can with every nuance of body posture and movement, is in for trouble if he inadvertently trespasses into that sacrosanct region his superior considers to be his own.

To complicate matters, the bears are highly individualistic and their reaction to other bears varies widely. A great male, full of fish, may benignly permit a vastly inferior bear to fish near him. Two days later fishing is poor, the potentate has just missed three salmon in a row, is in a filthy humour, and he turns in vicious anger upon the same bear he tolerated previously. A high-ranking bear may permit with aloof disdain a suitably humble underling to pass within ten feet; yet if a bear approaching his own stature and rank does the same thing, he feels threatened, compelled to assert his superiority and there is quite likely to be a fight.

I spent a part of two summers at McNeil Falls, in 1972 and again in 1975. I used to discuss with the

Head lowered and mouth closed, a weaker bear sidles humbly and slowly past his superior.

biologists studying the bears the possibility of using 'bear body language' in encounters with bears and came up with a simple set of rules: assume a submissive attitude (not difficult when faced by a 1,000-pound bear); do not stare at him; back up slowly; speak gently; and give him space and time for a graceful and peaceful exit.

The only occasion when I might have tested this theory came when I was returning one evening from the falls to our camping area two miles away. At one place the path is bordered on one side by a sheer cliff, on the other by the sea. As I came around a corner I was confronted at less than thirty yards by a female bear preceded by her two small cubs, a situation one ought to avoid, because it is likely to have a quick and painful ending. The she-bear woofed to her cubs, that throaty, urgent call female bears use to bring their offspring to heel. I backed up very rapidly and the moment I was around the corner ran until I reached a spot where I could climb the cliff. From its safety I watched. The she-bear, quite considerately, gave me five minutes' grace. Then she came down the path.

At this point I recognized her as Whitey, an old friend. In 1972 she had been by far the gentlest and most charming of the McNeil River bears, pathetically afraid of other bears but little worried about humans. Now even motherhood, which tends to bring out a furiously protective trait in female bears, had not changed her. She had come into this blessed state rather late in life, at the age of seven, rather than at

Two bears, near equals in strength, fight over a good fishing spot.

four or five as is more common for female bears. Perhaps her great fear of other bears had delayed the event. But finally, in the summer of 1974 she had succumbed to the dubious charm of Patches, an ancient, regal if somewhat ragged, male with a balding behind.

Patches, in 1972, was top bear on our side of the river. He was then about 16 years old, a massive mountain of a bear. He usually arrived in the early afternoon and at his approach panic spread among the weaker bears. A few left abruptly. Others got well out of the way. His fishing place was vacated instantly by whoever happened to occupy it. Patches shuffled on, oblivious to all the consternation he caused, assumed his rightful place, and stood in the icy, rushing water, hour after hour, swaying slightly from side to side, his total being concentrated upon the serious business of catching fish.

Whenever a salmon tried to slip past, he pounced upon it with a speed and agility incredible in an animal so big and bulky, pinned it down with long-clawed paws, grabbed it nearly simultaneously with his mouth, carried the fish to the islet near him and ate it, surrounded by hordes of squabbling glaucous-winged gulls hoping for leftovers. On good days he caught 20 or more salmon, weighing an average of six pounds each (one biologist saw a bear catch 69 salmon in one day). At first he ate all the fish, then only the females and finally, nearly sated, he gorged on roe, leaving the rest to gulls, ravens, and grateful inferiors.

In 1975, Patches, now 19, was still top bear, but distinctly past his prime. He fished at precisely the same spot where he had stood so patiently three years ago and, since this was the ideal spot on our side of the river, he still caught more fish faster than most other bears. Yet somehow the crown was slipping. Bears that three years before would have slunk around him signalling the most abject deference, now moved past with a minimum of customary courtesy. Occasionally the old monarch would assert himself and rush upon some unfortunate upstart with a roar of rage, but such displays of power were largely sham.

The ruler of the far side of the river was Charlie Brown, younger, heavier (at least 1,200 pounds) and more powerful than Patches, so powerful that he rarely had to show his strength. His aura of power kept all other bears at a respectful distance. One exception to this rule that gives the great males the best fishing spots, and total tranquillity to exploit them and eat their catch in peace (small bears are often bullied

A young bear flees from a greedy superior who wants to rob him of his salmon.

by larger bears into giving up their hard-caught fish) are females with cubs. These hair-trigger-tempered furies react so violently to anyone coming near their cubs — quite understandably so, since male bears are notoriously fond of eating cubs — that even great males do not like to tangle with them. When they do, the results can be spectacular.

One day a lady bear whom the American biologists had dubbed, a bit irreverently, Lady Bird, was catching fish at Charlie Brown's private preserve, while her three cubs, huddled on a rock behind her, watched with hopeful interest. Then Charlie Brown came shuffling down the river bank, immense wads of muscle rippling his chocolate-brown coat. He was not looking for trouble. He just wanted his rightful place. He walked down to the river and then moved sideways, his head turned away from the female, eyes averted, mouth closed, just easing over slowly, which in bear language means 'I don't want to fight, but I'm very big and this is my place, and so, lady, you better move over.' It was quite polite but very definite. Unfortunately Lady Bird was rather crotchety and high-strung and instead of sensibly backing off, she roared in mad fury, her mouth wide open, her great canines completely exposed, her hair abristle, her eyes glaring with hate. Charlie Brown placidly ignored her and kept shoving over a bit more. That did it. With a roar that drowned out the noise of the waterfall, Lady Bird charged. Charlie Brown was expecting it. Quick as lightning he swung around and as she flung herself at him, he hit. Lady Bird must have weighed close to 400 pounds, but the blow lifted her clear off the ground and threw her over backwards. She and her cubs left in a hurry and Charlie Brown calmly turned to fishing.

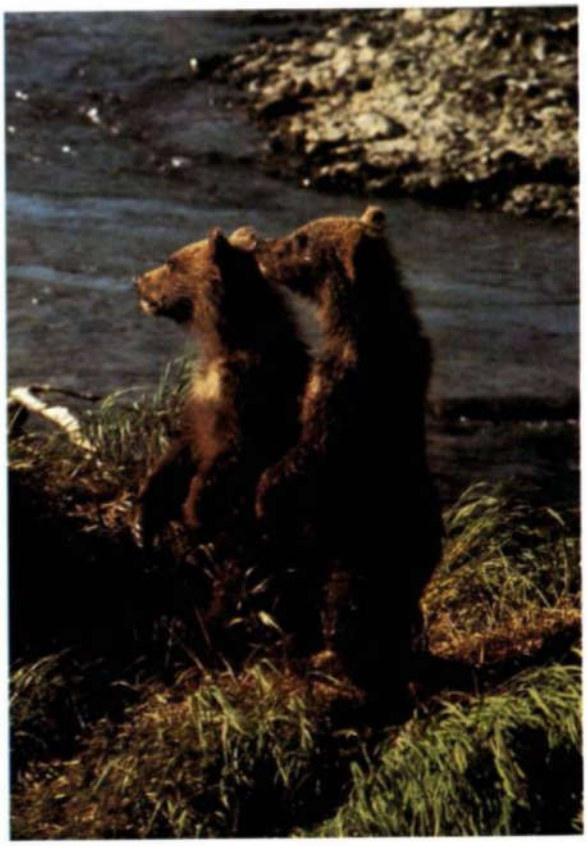
The females have it hard. They need the food much more than the big fat males, but they rarely have the peace of mind needed to be patient and successful fishermen. After all, it must be difficult to concentrate on fishing, with the worrying thought in mind that in the meantime someone may eat the children.

Whitey, for instance, was a devoted but not very competent mother. Since I had known her, so to speak, as a teenager, this did not surprise me. She was then a friendly but inept creature. She tried to fish, but with little success. Every once in a while she leapt into the river, throwing up geysers of spray, only to emerge sad, sodden, and fishless. Fortunately there was plenty of alternative food available and Whitey grew fat by grazing assiduously on the protein-rich sedges of the tidal flats, a mild and placid occupation well suited to her temperament.

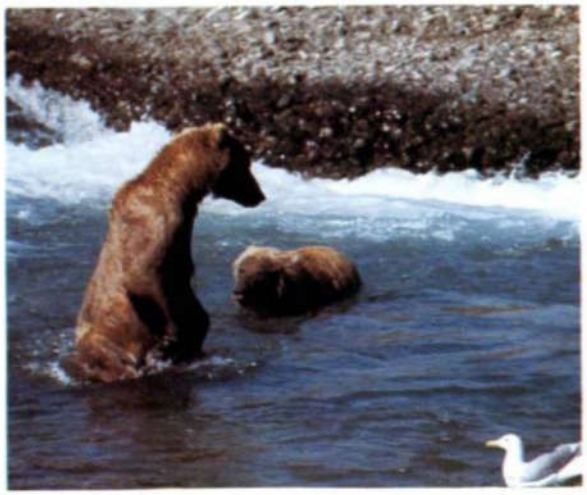
Motherhood, I would imagine, must have come as a big surprise to her. The cubs, who may grow into three-quarter-ton bears, weigh only a pound when they are born during hibernation, usually in January. They are naked, helpless, and spend the winter resting on their mother's broad furry chest, cradled by her big paws, drinking milk and sleeping. Now they were the size of fox terriers, curious, cute, and not very obedient. Older females were stricter with their offspring, but Whitey had still to learn how to keep her brood in line. And one day this brought about a near-tragedy.

A mother bear, trailed by her cubs, comes to the falls to fish.

Hungry and apprehensive, cubs watch their mother's progress from the river bank.



Bears looking for 'the one that got away'.



Whitey went to fish near an islet in midstream. To reach it, she had to cross a chest-deep channel of rushing water. She left her two cubs at the river's edge and 'told' them to remain there. Female bears 'talk' to their cubs in woofs, grunts, and growls, and when their instructions are disobeyed, reinforce them with cuffs. One growl means something like 'stay put' and, having said this, Whitey waded through the channel to the islet. But, perhaps because she was a lenient mother, the cubs did not obey, followed her, were swept off their stubby feet by the fast current and carried, squalling with fear, down the river.

This in itself was no great danger. Adults and cubs alike are excellent swimmers. But Whitey's cubs were being washed far away from the protection of their mother, in an area full of great male bears who might callously regard the cubs as lunch. Whitey, her mind set on fishing, did not realize for a while what had happened. When she noticed her cubs were missing and heard their faint cries in the distance, she became flustered and frantic. She galloped along the river bank, standing bolt upright from time to time for a better view of the bobbing heads of her cubs, and

Surrounded by gulls hoping for scraps, mother and cubs share a salmon.

bawled. In calmer water, down-river, the cubs finally paddled to shore and the reunited family came trotting back. Whitey led the cubs into the high grass not far from us and lay back in lovely, languid repose, her two suckling cubs held to her breast.

Until I watched the bears at McNeil, I had cherished a Disneyesque notion that bear cubs lead happy, playful lives, protected by powerful and devoted mothers. The latter is true; the females are fiercely protective and well equipped for it with finger-long, iron-hard claws and massive jaws armed with long teeth. As long as the cubs remain close to their mothers, they are probably safe. Nevertheless, biologists estimate that about 40 per cent of them die during their first year, and somehow a vague realization of the manifold dangers they face, clouds the cubs' existence. As long as they are near their mother, they appear happy and carefree. The moment she leaves, they are frantic with worry.

While the females fish, their cubs huddle near the river bank in timid, woebegone clusters, clinging to each other for comfort and courage. The moment an adult bear approaches, they flee in panic, usually into the high grass, which must be like a jungle to them and where the poor myopic tykes see little or nothing. They stand up, here and there, little worried heads poking out of the sea of grass, and bawl frantically for their mothers.

The females usually follow immediately, but in the high grass it is difficult to locate cubs and apart from that they seem to have trouble counting. Female bears have from one to four cubs, with two or three the most common numbers. After one of these great panics, it is not unusual to see a female who formerly had three cubs return to the falls with two, while another who originally had two, is now trailed by four. The cubs do not seem able to recognize their mother; they gladly attach themselves to any friendly female who offers protection, security, and milk. The females do know their cubs, but are quite willing to adopt and nurse, at least temporarily, any wailing waif that has lost its mother. In the long run, though, the families sort themselves out, because in a few days each female seems to have again her rightful complement of cubs.

Since the early 1950s, when McNeil was a 'secret river', known only to a few Alaskan biologists and wildlife buffs, its fame has spread to such an extent one may now watch the bears by appointment only. In 1967 the McNeil River State Game Sanctuary was established, and visits to the falls are regulated, on a quota basis, by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. In 1972 and 1975, the most numerous visitors seemed to be from western Europe and Japan, two regions where bears have been virtually exterminated.

Another unusual feature of McNeil is the acceptance of human presence by bears. Brown bears do not always take kindly to man. Attacks, often provoked by stupidity, do occur in other parts of Alaska and in 1974 a photographer was killed and eaten by a bear on Kodiak Island. But at McNeil, although there may be more than eighty bears in the vicinity of the falls, man and bear get along fairly well. People are expected to stick to certain paths, and cluster on one spot on the river bank. Bears may march past blithely within fifteen feet; they know people are there, but they just ignore them. If a person, despite warnings, turns up where he is not supposed to be, the bears may get huffy, but as yet no one has been injured by a McNeil River bear. The system of mutual respect seems to work.

Salmon, bears, and visitors arrive in early July. By mid-August the fishing season is usually over. The visitors leave and the bears disperse, to wander again on their own through this vast and beautiful land, until the following year when the thought of thousands of salmon will draw them again to McNeil River Falls.◆

'A Colony of Very Useful Hands'

By Jennifer Brown

IN THE MID 1700s, Hudson's Bay Company officer James Isham, writing at York Fort, observed that at that place, the children of traders and Indian women had become 'pretty Numerious'. In the 1770s, William Falconer at Severn remarked that at each Company post there could be found 'a breed of People easily distinguished from the real Indians by their lighter coloured hair'. No Hudson's Bay Company man of the 1700s described these offspring as 'halfbreeds'; this term, with its later derogatory connotations, was a nineteenth-century usage. But Isham, Falconer, and other observers of the mid to late 1700s could not fail to notice that a new racial subgroup was emerging along the shores of Hudson Bay, paralleling the appearance of the North West Company Métis to the south and west.

In the same period, the London directors of the Hudson's Bay Company were recognizing that their early efforts to prevent traders from taking country wives and forming families in the Bay had failed. Accepting the situation, they began to cope with the new problems that these families presented, seeking, for example, to regulate the travel of Hudson Bay dependents to Britain and to administer the annuities that growing numbers of Company men willed to their Bay families upon their deaths.

As the offspring at the Bay posts increased in number, they won attention as a distinct group presenting both problems and possibilities to the Company and the trade. Around 1800, a cluster of new hiring, apprenticing, and educational policies and practices began to focus upon them, intended to make them into loyal and useful members of the post communities and to equip them with sufficient skills and education so that they could find Company employment.

The changing attitudes and policies towards native-born offspring in the Hudson's Bay Company may be traced in considerable detail in certain post records of this period. Some of the most complete and most interesting post journals relevant to this subject originated at Moose Factory where traders and their descendants had begun to form an expanding web of Hudson Bay families linked together by kinship and marital ties. From the 1780s until his retirement in 1813, the keeper of these journals was almost continuously one man, John Thomas. Over the years his records showed some interesting and significant changes reflective of his own development and of social trends in the fur-trade community of Moose Factory.

During the years 1785-89, Thomas generally made no direct references either to native-born children of traders as such, or to native women as traders' partners, although both were, by then, amply represented at Moose. He himself had a native wife and growing family, eventually totalling nine children born between 1780 and 1807, according to the Moose Factory register of baptisms and other family data that he began keeping about 1810. But by the late 1790s, he was regularly and openly referring to these persons and describing their activities. On 28 July 1797 'with the assistance of some of the Women and Children, we got some more of the Hay dried.' Later, 'three of the Factory Boys [a new category] and four Indian Lads' left on a local boat trip. In the same period, the shipwright and cooper were plying their trades with the help of their native-born sons; tradesmen as well as officers such as Thomas now had Hudson Bay families to an increasing extent.

The following winter's journal noted other diverse activities of the Moose Factory children. Sometimes they were getting firewood, setting rabbit snares, or pheasant-hunting with Thomas himself. On 22 January 1798 'three of the Boys yoked one Team of Cattle and sledged home firewood and Timber' and on 12 March some of the boys were helping the women with ice fishing. From this period on, fur-trade children were much mentioned and often individually named, as they acquired locally-needed skills and trades and contributed in varied ways to subsistence and other work at Moose Factory.

Certain children's activities of equal interest were first mentioned in this period. While some boys were bringing home firewood on 22 January 1798 'the other Boys & Children' were 'at their Books'. References to schoolwork thereafter recur intermittently during the relatively slack winter seasons. In December 1799, John Thomas summarized the children's studies and other work as follows:

Jennifer Brown was awarded her PhD in anthropology from the University of Chicago in 1976. Her thesis was 'Company Men and Native Families: Fur-trade Social and Domestic Relations in Canada's Old Northwest'.

Grateful acknowledgement is made to the Hudson's Bay Company for permission to quote from its archives.

GLENBOW-ALBERTA INSTITUTE

'The Factor's Indian Wife and Child'. A painting by Frank Schoonover.

In order to avoid daily repetitions concerning the Boys & other Children, I shall here remark, that except when their Services are required out Doors they are kept at their Books — the larger Boys at times . . . are sent round the Fox Guns, rabbit snaring &c, Gills [the shipwright's] Son is now Framing a Boat, they likewise attend on Chief's Table — lead the hauling Cattle, & in short are employ'd in any little offices they are Capable of.

The 1790s, then, were years in which factory children were not only making small-scale economic contributions but also receiving some training and schooling; both activities were explicitly noted in the journals. The London Committee had previously supplied the posts with religious books, and chief officers had been encouraged to hold Sunday services and promote 'Virtue, Diligence, and Sobriety'. Now it was to consider supporting the education, and the vocational as well as moral training of the children at the posts, a move encouraged by interested trader fathers and by the Company's discovery that 'Factory boys' in particular could be encouraged to play useful roles at the posts and in the trade, if given some attention.

The Thomas journals at Moose and other evidence indicate that native-born youths began to fill a particular social and economic niche in the posts. In so doing, they supplanted an older category of Company servant. The Company in its first decades had commonly brought out young apprentices from England — boys who matured and learned trades while serving the Company. By around 1800, such apprentice roles were increasingly being filled locally, by the traders' own sons. George, son of Malchom Ross, and John, son of George Sutherland, were granted apprenticeships at York by 1800. And in November 1800, John Hodgson, chief at Albany Factory, recorded that he had apprenticed three boys 'now past 14 Years of Age' (one being his own son) to the Albany shipwright, house carpenter, and cooper respectively:

as their Inclinations tend toward the several Trades they are put to, I have hopes in a few Years, they will be Capable of being useful, in these several Branches, and trust your Honors will approve of my Actions in this respect towards these Youths Educated and Brought up in the Factory.

These apprenticing actions, along with other evidence of the changing roles of native youths, correspond closely in time to a new hiring policy that the Company directors were establishing in London. On 21 February 1798, the London Committee ended

its long practice of recruiting numerous of its British servants in their early or mid-teens by resolving that 'after this day no person be engaged as a Servant to the Company who is under the Age of Eighteen'. Whatever their other reasons, the directors may have begun to realize that their Bay posts now held their own growing populations of youths and potential apprentices and junior servants, and that personnel policies in Britain could be revised accordingly. It is certain that on various occasions they were hearing of the usefulness of these fur-trade sons both to their Company fathers and seniors and to the trade itself. In 1803, John Thomas wrote to London, doubtless with the sons of former officer George Atkinson and several others in mind: 'The services of . . . Native Youths are becoming every year more & more conspicuous . . . they are almost our sole dependance both for supplying & supporting the Inland Stations, as well as otherwise opposing the Canadians.'

In the context of these developments, the Company moved to initiate and support a more formal program of schooling at its major posts. Its motives were mainly practical. In May of 1806, Bay officers were asked to respond to a proposal to instruct servants' children in the rudiments of religion and in reading, writing, and 'arithmetic accounts'. The directors hoped this would 'attach them to our Service & in a short time become a Colony of very useful Hands.' They added that, while 'the nature of the country & Service' precluded sending out ministers, they saw 'less difficulty in sending out persons merely to serve as Schoolmasters'.

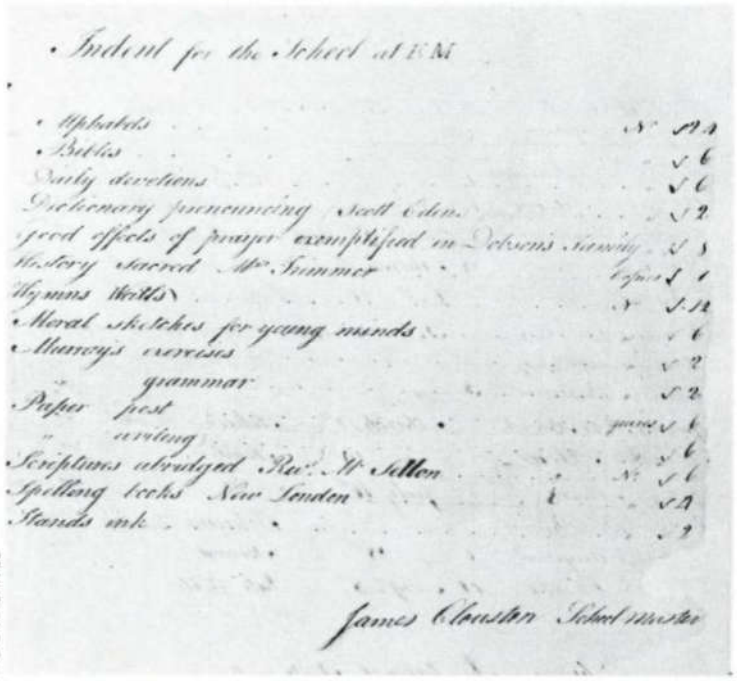
Bay officers responded favourably to these proposals, and in May 1807, London letters outward noted that parcels of schoolbooks were being sent to all the factories. Regular schoolmasters had not yet been hired, but the surgeons of the different posts were to use their leisure time for teaching, with 'proper Remuneration to be added'. By the fall of 1807, some post journals were making more frequent reference to the instructing of traders' children. At Albany, for example, William Spence on several days acted as 'Schoolmaster' along with 'Mr. McCormick Surgeon, who . . . has paid particular attention to the Children whenever his professional duties would allow it.'

During the same period, the London directors were formulating more specific policies and procedures regarding their new schools in the Bay, and determining the resources they would commit to these enterprises. It was now unquestioned that 'Factory boys' should receive basic practical instruction; further, no one seems to have suggested denying basic schooling to girls at the posts. There was, however, some discussion over how much special attention should be allocated to girls — discussion suggestive of traders' growing aspirations for their children and of the kind of life and community for which they now hoped to see them prepared. The York officers raised these issues most explicitly in their London letter of 1807, communicating their 'Sentiments on this most interesting subject', deploring the 'present helpless Condition of our Children' and offering to contribute towards the extra costs of the following proposal:

> this is the anxious desire of every Parent that the Happiness resulting from Education and Religion should be imparted without distinction to the Children of both Sexes and that the female Youth in particular should experience that delicacy and attention to their persons their peculiar Situation requires — Native Women as Attendants on these young persons seem improper — their Society would keep alive the Indian language and with it, its native superstition which ought to be obliterated from the mind with all possible care — It is therefore humbly suggested that a female from England of suitable abilities & good moral Character accompany the school-master would obviate the necessity of employing such attendants & the cleanliness of the Children & domestic Economy of the Seminary under the superintendance of a respectable Matron would . . . promise to the undertaking that Success which could not be expected from a more limited regulation . . . The Residence of the Children & their Instructors would be most convenient at a short distance from the Factory . . . such retired Situations would not only estrange the Children from their Indian Acquaintance but present other advantages friendly to the progress of Education, Morality, and Good order.

The request for a separate 'Seminary' with British matron did not win approval; aside from the extra costs involved, white women were still excluded from Hudson Bay, as they had been for most of the Company's history. When London sent forth its 'School Instructions' in 1808, however, it instructed

Spelling books, ink stands and Bibles were among the items listed on this indent dated 29 August 1810, for the school at Eastmain.



Indent for the School at E M

Alphabets
Bibles
Daily devotions
Dictionary pronouncing Scott Edin.
good effects of prayer exemplified in Dobsons Annuity
History sacred Mrs. Trimmer
Hymns Watts
Moral sketches for young minds
Murrays exercises
" grammar
Paper post
" writing
Scriptures abridged Revd. M. Sutton
Spelling books New London
Stands ink

James Clouston School master

H B C ARCHIVES

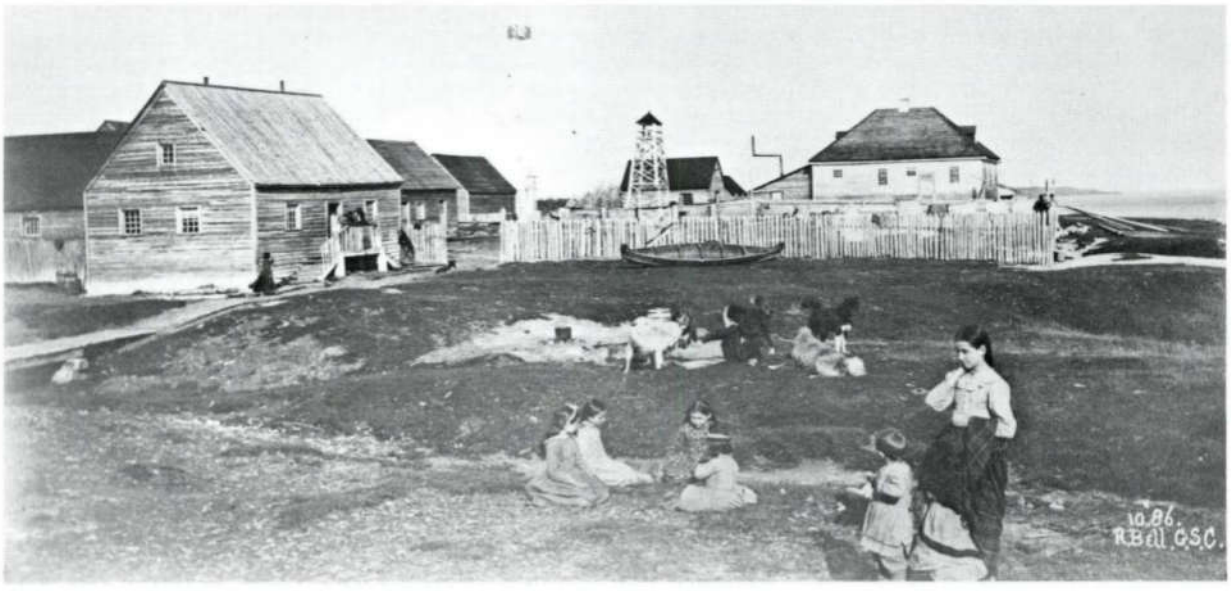
that all children of currently-employed servants were to be admitted to school 'without distinction at the age of 5 Years complete' to remain for seven years or until done with their course of studies and, in the case of boys, 'useful to be employed in the Service'. A schoolmaster was sent to each major post, with orders to instruct not only servants' children but also those of the 'Chiefs of Trading Tribes friendly to the Company' if the chiefs so desired, to cultivate their 'Friendship & Gratitude'.

The results of these well-intended efforts towards education can best be described as mixed. For a brief period, marked success and progress were reported. In September 1809, the York officers sent home some schoolwork as 'Samples of Progress' and wrote that 'the School Establishment is proceeding under the happiest presages of Success — The amelioration already taken place is sufficient to justify the Hopes of the Well Wishers of the Institution and to fix in us a firm Belief that the Results tho distant will be eventually beneficial to your honours Concerns'. But later York school records appear lacking. At Eastmain Factory an Orkney schoolmaster, James Clouston, taught a class of about fifteen children from October 1808 to early 1811, using books that ranged from scriptural subjects and Mrs Trimmer's *Sacred History*, to *Moral Sketches for Young Minds*, to grammar and spelling. But by mid-1811, Clouston's activities had become entirely centred upon the fur trade itself, and remained so until his retirement at the rank of clerk in 1827.

The Albany school seems to have been the best recorded, thanks to the efforts of its master, William Harper. His 'School Journal', kept from August 1808 to September 1809, records the varying attendance and progress of twenty-three pupils (fifteen boys and eight girls), among them two Indian children. He began with eleven children who already knew the alphabet. But some later entrants presented a bigger challenge; Mary Prince, aged about fourteen, scarcely knew the letters, and Margaret Goodwin, aged about thirteen, entered in April 1809 'not knowing one Single Letter'. Four students eventually began arithmetic, but Harper found that subject 'the hardest to make them understand of anything'. By August 1809, however, five boys (three being sons of Albany chief Hodgson) and one girl (Harriot Vincent, later Gladman) were capable of writing 'Copy Books to go to England'. Harper's effectiveness must have been restricted by his students' irregular attendance. In December, one officer withdrew both his children because he was leaving the factory 'to go a hunting'. Another temporarily withdrew his daughter in April to go goose hunting; and soon after, John Hodgson Jr left, to be 'employ'd working with the Cooper'. Few students attended continuously. No subsequent school journals survive to record later developments, but it is likely that problems with attendance and conflicting activities persisted.

No comparable school journal survives from Moose Factory, but John Thomas's post journal for 1808-09 documents as clearly as Harper's school journal at Albany the extent to which regular post and trade-related activities competed with schoolwork for the attentions of the pupils and even of the schoolmaster himself. On frequent occasions the master and boys were out after winter provisions, fishing, and partridge-hunting. In May and June 1809, the master was at times 'teaching his little school' (then four boys and a girl) and at times acting

Children at an H B C fort (probably Albany). From a photograph taken in 1886 by Robert Bell, Geological Survey of Canada.

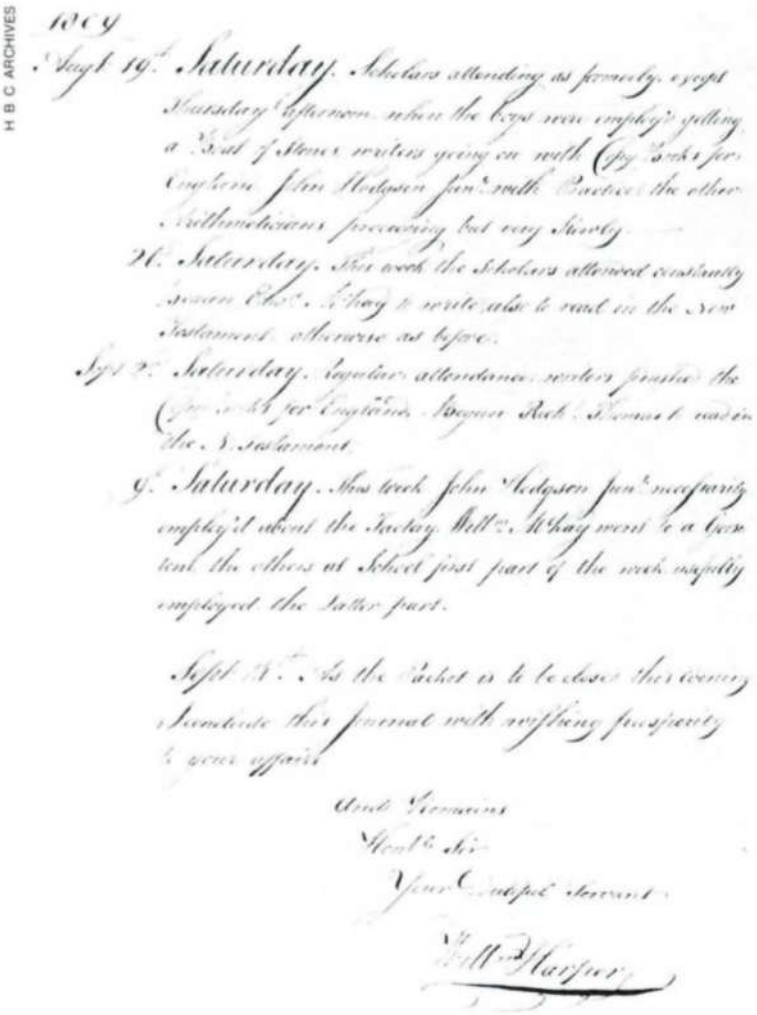


as steward, since the steward had been set to other activities such as making buoys. In July, always a busy time, the schoolmaster was helping both as steward and in the packing of furs, while the boys were gardening and fishing. In October he was again a steward while the steward helped to build a new schoolhouse (a project begun a year previously and evidently much interrupted — it was not completed until late in 1810). He also helped the boys to reap barley and stow potatoes, then assisted in the warehouse and writing room while the boys ground oatmeal, hunted geese, and fished. Not until 2 November did he again begin 'teaching his little school' — now four boys and four girls.

Schoolwork was again subject to major interruptions in springtime, when the master was called upon to replace the steward who was away with the inland boats. The children received instruction on 12 May but 'at these busy times the School cannot be regularly attended.' On 14 May Thomas recorded 'the School Master besides acting as Steward assists me in the Warehouse & when at leisure Instructs the Children'. Finally, an entry for 6 August 1810 summarized the problems besetting these infant educational enterprises in Hudson Bay. On that day the 'School Master began teaching the Children again which many unavoidable interruptions & circumstances have almost totally prevented for above three Months past.'

Despite good intentions, then, it was most difficult to organize and maintain an effective educational system for the Hudson Bay posts. Both the Company directors and fur-trade fathers, like growing numbers of Britishers in general, increasingly saw education as useful and beneficial; yet its adequate provision in Hudson Bay would have consumed much more time, energy, and money than the Company and its personnel could or would readily spare. As a result, the literacy acquired by Hudson Bay pupils at their best could not compete with the education made possible by an extended stay in Britain for that special purpose. At a time when the general literacy of the British population was increasing, few native-born youths were equipped to compete with their British peers for advancement. In earlier years apprentices from Britain had been able to rise through the ranks, perhaps acquiring some literacy at the same time. The native apprentices of the early 1800s found themselves in a much less favourable competitive situation, even if supported and encouraged by interested fathers, fathers-in-law, or friends at the posts.

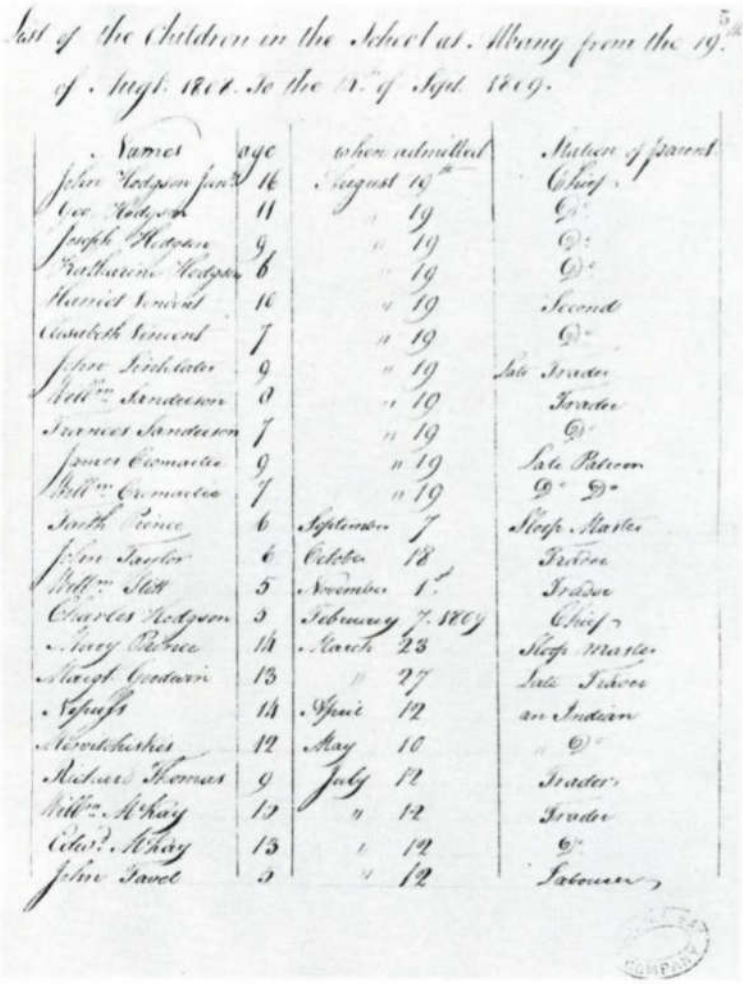
Possibly a Hudson Bay education may have proved more useful to fur-trade daughters than to sons, given the lower contemporary educational expectations for women than for men. Harriot Vincent, one of William Harper's best pupils at Albany, later ranked


H B C ARCHIVES

A 'School Journal' kept by William Harper recorded the attendance of fifteen boys and eight girls at the Albany School. The above is his closing entry dated 14 Sept 1809.

relatively high as an officer's wife and was the closest companion of any mixed-blood woman to the well-educated Scottish-born Letitia Hargrave at York Factory in the 1840s. It may be that some slight education also improved other fur-trade daughters' chances for higher positions and marriages in the fur-trade social world.

Aside from the discouraging amounts of time, energy, and money needed to provide adequate schools, new developments probably diverted the Company from the further cultivation of schools at the Bay posts. It was in these years that Lord Selkirk first proposed to bring colonists into lands along the Red River and at the same time to provide a place, equipped with schools and churches, for Company servants to settle with their native families. The first colonists arrived at York Factory late in 1811 under the leadership of Miles Macdonell, who found the York officers, like the Company itself, supportive of the colony. As he wrote to Lord Selkirk:



List of the Children in the School at Albany from the 19th of Sept. 1808. to the 18th of Sept. 1809.

Names	age	when admitted	Station of parent
John Hodgson jun.r	16	August 19th	Chief
Geo. Hodgson	11	" 19	Do
Joseph Hodgson	9	" 19	Do
Katharine Hodgson	6	" 19	Do
Harriet Vincent	16	" 19	Second
Elizabeth Vincent	7	" 19	Do
John Colchester	9	" 19	Late Trader
Robt.n Sanderson	8	" 19	Trader
Frances Sanderson	7	" 19	Do
James Cromarty	9	" 19	Late Patroon
Robt.n Cromarty	7	" 19	Do Do
South Prince	6	September 7	Sloop Master
John Taylor	6	October 18	Trader
Robt.n Stitt	5	November 1st	Trader
Charles Hodgson	3	February 7. 1809	Chief
Mary Rebecca	14	March 23	Sloop Master
Margt Cardarri	13	" 27	Late Trader
Nepuss	14	April 12	an Indian
Nicodemus	12	May 10	Do
Richard Thomas	9	July 12	Trader
Robt.n McKay	13	" 12	Trader
Edwd McKay	13	" 12	Do
John Favel	3	" 12	Salteaux

HBC ARCHIVES

The careers of the four Hodgson boys who were listed on the Albany school record above, suffered when their father, Chief at Albany, was removed from his position for mismanagement.

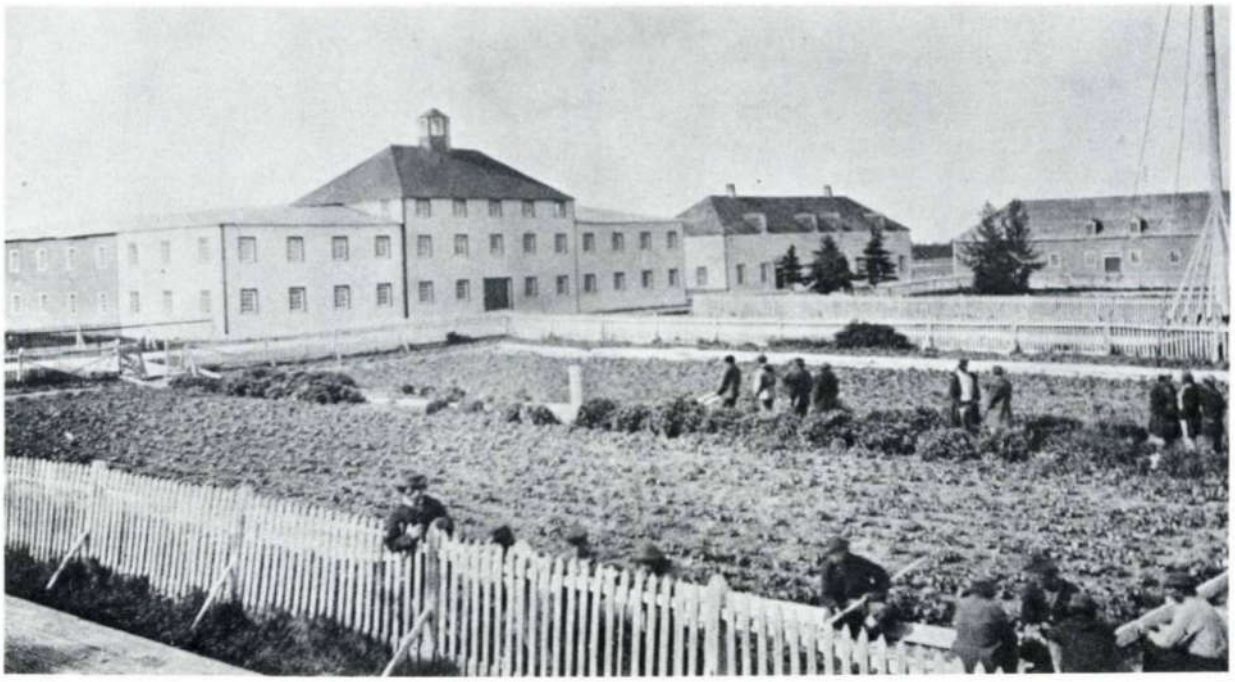
They, as well as a great number of the Company' officers and other servants in the country, feel interested in its success and look towards it as a future asylum for themselves and their numerous offspring. — I am informed that many of the Company's Servants . . . who have served their time, and have families with Indian women will be induced to join as soon as they see a Settlement begun on a permanent basis.

Officers' hopes for Red River may accordingly have diverted attention from the further development of local schools. Yet it was another full decade before Red River became firmly established in the face of such problems as North West Company opposition to its land claims and its Hudson's Bay Company sponsorship. In the meantime, increasing numbers of Hudson Bay offspring were maturing at the posts. Without trade skills and education, they could not obtain secure Company employment or advancement, and accordingly suffered from the continued deficiencies of schooling in the Bay, unless they were fortunate enough to have officer fathers willing and able to educate them for extended periods in Britain.

It would be misleading, however, to suggest that better schooling in the Bay, or even periods at school in Britain, could alone have secured the social standing and economic fortunes of these Company offspring in the fur trade and in white society at large. Better education was only a partial equalizer of opportunity. In the small social worlds of the Bay posts, personal ties, particularly among officers and their Hudson Bay families and relatives, were of much importance in determining the social and economic placement of these offspring in the fur trade. The personal presence and interest of a Company father, himself securely employed, could greatly aid his children's careers, just as his lack of interest and absence or dismissal from the Company could hurt them.

The prospects of the offspring of John Hodgson, chief at Albany, were much influenced by the vicissitudes of that officer's career. Two Hodgson sons had early received Company and paternal encouragement to qualify for responsible positions. The elder spent some time at school in England, returning to Albany in the summer of 1800. The London Committee noted on that occasion that he was still 'too Young to be engaged as a Writer' but that Hodgson might place him on the books at £8 a year as an 'Assistant Writer'. They added that 'In due time he shall meet with the proper Encouragement'. In May of 1807, the committee allowed Hodgson to bring his son Thomas home with him on leave, 'being ready to facilitate your views in educating & qualifying your Son for the Company's Service.' In 1808-09, four younger Hodgson boys were listed as attending the Albany school.

In 1810, however, the prospects of the Hodgson offspring were much changed by a Company decision regarding their father; John Hodgson was removed from his Albany command on a charge of mismanagement. Rather than returning to England, which he had left thirty-four years before as a Grey Coat School pupil and apprentice, Hodgson left Albany with some of his family to take up land at Lac des Chats on the Ottawa River. During the next decade, travellers on that important water route wrote vivid accounts of this ex-governor and his inelegant establishment. Colin Robertson, travelling inland from Montreal on Company business, found his mode of life differed little from that of the Indians: 'One room served him for dining room, bedchamber and kitchen.' Hodgson conversed 'upon a grand scale . . . but in the middle of his harangue a large Pig entered the room, which cut the thread of his discourse . . . he informed me that he was many years Governor of Albany, but really I think the upper works of his excellency is a little deranged.' On a later visit, Robertson met three Hodgson sons. One of them, Thomas, 'leaning on a paddle' eyed 'the company or bottles with no small degree of interest.' Tom had a wife, 'a lady with a ring in her nose', who was an excellent trapper of muskrats. Given the



Few native-born sons of traders could compete with their British peers for advancement to higher postings. Here a group of men tend the vegetable gardens at York Factory. From an 1880 photograph by Robert Bell.

circumstances of their forced retirement and isolated life at Lac des Chats, it is not surprising that the Hodgson sons, whenever they served the Company in later years, were employed in low capacities.

Like the Hodgsons, clerk John Vincent, son of Chief Factor Thomas Vincent, fared poorly after his father left the service in the late 1820s. In 1827, after over a decade of service, he was described as 'A Halfbreed, weak, timid, and useless — not sufficiently educated for a Clerk . . . Retained for the present out of feeling and respect to his father, who has been many years at the head of the Department.' After his father left the country, John was noted in Governor George Simpson's records to be 'Indolent and useless reduced to [lower rank of] a Post Master'. As happened with some other sons of officers, his prospects declined once he lost the benefit of the immediate presence and patronage of a well-placed father. The personnel cutbacks that followed the merger of the Hudson's Bay and North West Companies in 1821 subjected this man and numerous other native-born servants who lacked good educations and influential fathers or other patrons, to new and severe pressures.

In overview, the efforts to bring schools to the posts of Hudson Bay in the early 1800s are most interesting, not for the magnitude of their contributions to the careers of the Company children they were intended to benefit, but for what they reveal about the Company post communities as social and cultural entities in this period. These Bay posts were no longer specialized forts or garrisons as their original predecessors had been; they consisted of growing settlements of traders and their families and descendants who looked mainly to Britain and the Company for support and employment, and for models upon which to pattern their cultural values and social life. Unknown numbers of traders' native offspring in earlier times took up the Indian lives of their maternal relatives. But many Company servants of the late 1700s and early 1800s increasingly hoped to make permanent their 'marriages according to the custom of the country'. They treated their native wives and children as legitimate and kept them within the orbit of British society and culture, even in its attenuated form at these remote settlements, rather than lose them to Indian life.

Their strong personal interests, then, coincided for a while with their Company's interest in converting post dependents into 'useful hands' familiar with the country and trade and helpful against growing North West Company competition. The plans for Red River, however, along with cost considerations and the later personnel reductions that the merger of 1821 made possible, seemed to lower the priority assigned to maintaining schools at the posts. Potential native-born recruits became too much in surplus for the Company to feel any strong need for their systematic training and education into desirable employees. British education thus failed to become established at these remote outposts on the Bay, and had to be sought instead at Red River, or better, in Britain or eastern Canada, by those Company families able and willing to invest the ample resources needed to pursue it. ◆

The Grave of Lord Selkirk

By Hubert G. Mayes

Associate Professor of French, University of Winnipeg.

Photographs of the grave are by the author.

IN APRIL 1976, I set out on a five-week trip to France which was to include a visit to a number of cities in the region of the Pyrenees, including the city of Pau. As a teacher of French and a student of history, I had always been intrigued to read in accounts of the founding of the Red River Colony that Thomas Douglas, the fifth Earl of Selkirk — to give him his full name and title — had died in Pau. In most history books, the final sentence of the section devoted to Selkirk's work states in essence that the Earl, discouraged and ill as a result of his legal battles with the North-West Company, went with his family to Pau in an attempt to recover his health. There he died 8 April 1820, at the age of forty-nine. Knowing that I would be travelling to Pau, I resolved to discover where he was buried and to visit the grave. A biography, *Life of Lord Selkirk* by Dr George Bryce gave me the information I needed: Lord Selkirk was buried in the Protestant cemetery of Orthez, a small city located twenty-eight miles west of Pau.

On the morning of 14 May I boarded a bus in Biarritz, passed through some of the most beautiful country in France, and arrived about two hours later on the Place d'Armes of Orthez. I found a room at the Hôtel du Béarn, fortified myself with lunch in a little café across from the City Hall, and was ready to begin

Selkirk's grave in the Protestant cemetery of Orthez, in Southern France.

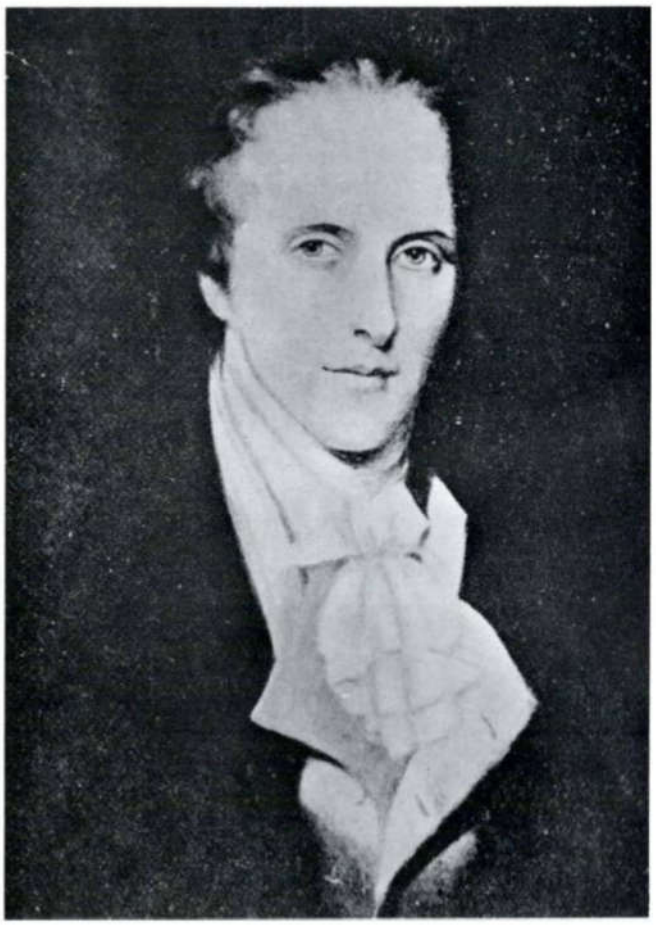
my quest. At the local tourist bureau two young women who had never heard of Lord Selkirk but wanted very much to be helpful, suggested that I begin by visiting the pastor of the Protestant 'temple'. As it happened, it was the caretaker of the church who showed me on my city map the way to the local cemetery. After a ten-minute walk I reached the gate where an old lady was busy gathering up some withered flowers. She was the only person in sight and I asked her if she could help me. Yes, she knew about the grave which English people sometimes came to visit and would guide me to it. At this moment Mme Douchine, the wife of the caretaker, appeared and the three of us made our way through the rows of graves towards the Selkirk tomb. As we approached, Mme Douchine pointed out two English oak trees which Selkirk's family had planted, one at either end of the small plot. One tree is now completely dead and the other nearly so and this, I was informed, was creating a problem for the caretakers. When we arrived at the plot I saw that the two trees were encircled by a thick growth of ivy which I assumed had killed them. They had heaved the iron fence out of line and the one at the foot of the grave had grown into the fence, part of which was now embedded in the trunk. The main reason for concern was that the dead branches fall from the trees and damage the other tombstones near by. The families who are responsible for the maintenance of these stones have complained and, quite understandably, have requested that the trees be removed. In order to obtain permission to do this, the caretaker has attempted to locate Lord Selkirk's descendants. Although he was unsuccessful, the cemetery board is still reluctant to take responsibility, hoping apparently that someone may still be found to give the desired authorization and, in addition, foot the bill for the rather tricky operation of removing the oaks. The trees have become well known to the Protestants of Orthez. Over the years, when funerals were held on hot summer days, the pastor and mourners would often gather under their shady branches.

The grave markers consist of a headstone and the tomb itself, both of grey granite. The headstone bears the clear inscription:

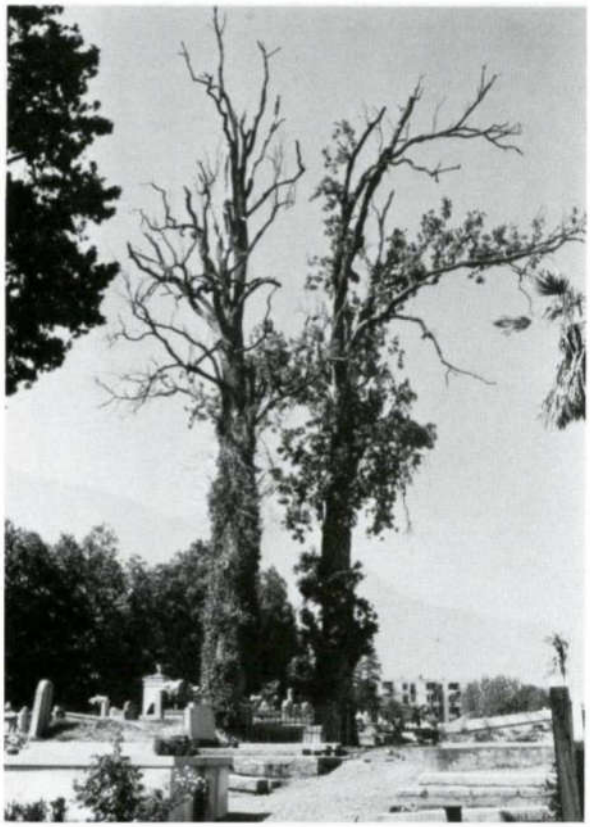
THE
EARL OF SELKIRK
DIED
APRIL 8, 1820
AGED 49 YEARS

The flat stone, however, was so covered with lichens and the lettering so affected by weathering that not a single word of the inscription could be deciphered. After taking some pictures, I made arrangements to return the following morning to make another attempt to read the inscription and to take more pictures with the morning sun on the face of the headstone.

The inscription on the headstone records the death of the Earl of Selkirk on April 8, 1820, aged 49 years.



Lord Selkirk who planted colonies of Highlanders in Prince Edward Island, in Upper Canada at Baldoon near Lake St Clair, and in the Red River Valley.



One of the tall English oaks planted on Selkirk's grave by his family is completely dead, and the other nearly so. The families who tend nearby graves have asked that the trees be removed.

When I arrived the next day, M. Douchine left his work to greet me. Just as friendly and helpful as his wife, he explained that his father and grandfather had been caretakers of the cemetery and that one of his sons, who was trained as a stone-cutter, would succeed him. He had known about Selkirk's tomb all his adult life and was keen to tell of how his father had repaired the grave for a grandson of Selkirk in 1915, of how the father had recorded on the stone the details concerning the repairs and of how for years thereafter he received a bank draft from Scotland every All Saints' Day to repay him for keeping the plot in order.

M. Douchine pulled up a handful of grass and began rubbing it over the stone to bring out the inscriptions. When this proved unsuccessful, he went away, returning in a few minutes with a scrub brush and a special acid for cleaning stones. After two applications of the acid and a considerable amount of brushing by both the caretaker and his wife, the inscriptions were finally revealed and I was able to satisfy my curiosity. The first, a quotation from the Book of Proverbs, reads as follows:

Le sentier des justes est comme
la lumière resplendissante qui
augmente son éclat jusqu'à ce que le
jour soit en sa perfection.

Proverbes IV 18

The second inscription states:

Cette tombe a été réparée en 1915
par le capitaine John Hope
Marine royale de Sa Majesté
d'Ecosse petit-fils du comte de
SELKIRK

Judging by the amount of cleaning necessary to uncover the words, it had been a very long time since anyone had paid more than a cursory visit to the grave.

M. Douchine outlined what he thought should be done to restore the plot and stones. The trees should be removed and replaced with tall shrubs of the cypress family, the iron fence should be straightened, repaired and painted, and the inscriptions should be re-engraved. The small area enclosed by the fence could also be covered with cement or gravel. The caretaker assured me that he would be happy to give a written estimate of the cost of this work to anyone planning to have it done. I told him I was sure that in my home province of Manitoba, where Selkirk was a famous historical figure, there would be organizations and individuals interested in such a project.

Before leaving Orthez, I returned to the tourist bureau to report on the success of my visit. By good fortune, M. Gildard, the director of the bureau, was present. He has written a number of monographs on the history and famous persons of Orthez, but was unaware of the grave that I had come to see. He was most interested in hearing about the life of Lord Selkirk and promised his help to anyone in Canada who might be interested in doing further research on the last months, death, and interment of the Earl. He explained that in 1820 there was no Protestant community in Pau, whereas Orthez has always been a strong centre of Protestantism, and that this must certainly have been the reason why the interment took place twenty-eight miles from Pau. (John Morgan Grey in *Lord Selkirk of Red River* simply states that the nearest Protestant cemetery to Pau was at Orthez.)

Since my visit to Orthez, I have obtained permission from the descendants of Lord Selkirk to restore the plot and the gravestones. The project has been submitted to the Manitoba Historical Society and the Manitoba Historic Sites Advisory Board. Both groups have expressed keen interest and steps are now being taken to obtain the necessary funds. Plans are also being made to erect a marker of some kind near the grave. Lord Selkirk's memory is honoured in Canada by plaques, statues, and place names, but in far-off Orthez there is nothing at this time to indicate that the simple grey stones mark the final resting place of a far-sighted and courageous man who made a significant contribution to the development of Canada. ◆

The Shiny House . . .
and the Man Who Built It

By Ruth Humphrys

From Cannington Manor in the south-eastern corner of present-day Saskatchewan, James Humphrys wrote a series of letters home to his wife Jenny in the summer of 1888. These remain in the possession of the Humphrys family, and describe the planning and building of the 'Shiny House'.

Author Ruth Humphrys has written articles, and plays for stage and television. Her husband, E. W. Humphrys, is a grandson of James.

James Humphrys, from a portrait taken in England, probably during his career as a naval architect.

'WELL, I HAVE, after long deliberation and daily prayer for a wise decision bought Section 9 of this township and succeeded in getting the land for 11/9 per acre, and I am very busy now making arrangements to build a nice house and stable, and hope to send you a plan of the house by next mail . . . I intend if possible to get the materials for the stable ordered today and run up this building as soon as possible, so as to utilize it as a place in which the workmen can sleep and have their meals so as to be always on the spot while the house is building'.

So wrote James Humphrys to Jenny 'My Darling Wifie' in England. It was the first of May, 1888, just seven weeks since he and their eldest son, Ernest, had sailed from Liverpool to Halifax to start a new life for the family in the Canadian Northwest. Eight children remained at home with their mother. The eldest daughter Mary was, at the time, in Stuttgart studying art and music but she would return to England to join the rest of the family when they came out the following October.

James had had a varied career in England. By profession he was a naval architect who played a large part in the design and building of *The City of Rome*, the largest Atlantic liner afloat at the time of her launching in 1881. He had been actively engaged in management of shipbuilding firms in both Hull and Barrow-in-Furness, then had given up this career to take over the management of an electrical manufacturing company in London. He suffered from gout, however, and at the age of fifty-one was forced to retire. The doctor advised a dry climate.

In English newspapers he had read glowing accounts of the wonders of prairie life written by Captain E. M. Pierce, the founder of Cannington Manor in Assiniboia, now south-east Saskatchewan. Pierce too had been a martyr to gout but now, thanks to the invigorating climate, was practically cured.

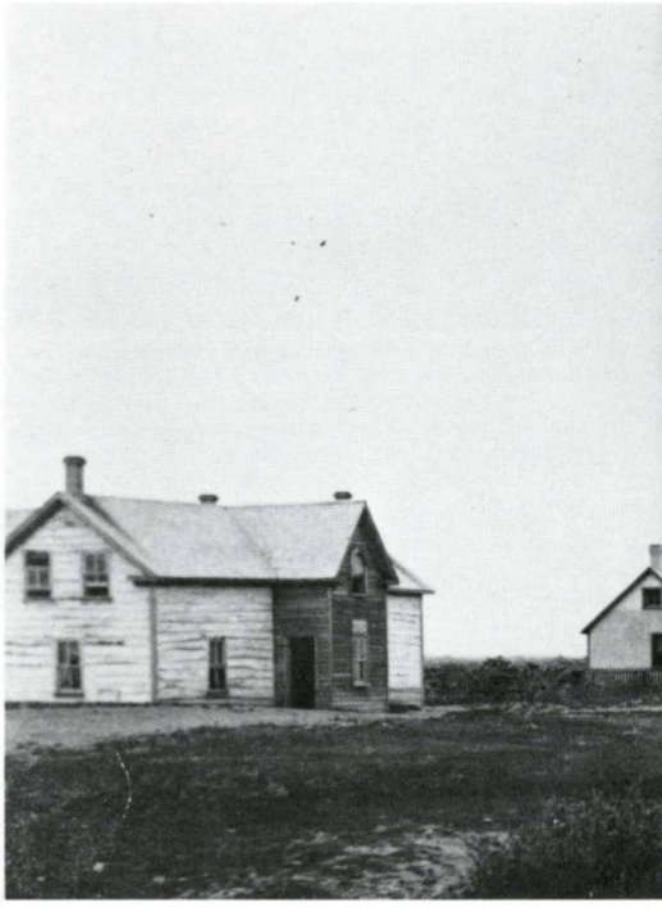
Perhaps the size of his family was another factor in James's decision to emigrate. He was not a wealthy man, but he had sufficient funds to carry out his plans and establish his family comfortably. Land was cheap; it was possible to have 'an estate' rather than a mere house. When he arrived in Cannington he was delighted to find so many settlers 'of good family' in the small community. There was an active social life centred around the church, sports, music, and parties. This mattered; he wrote in one of his letters, 'I cannot but recognize this all important question of social surroundings for you and the children.' It does not

SASKATCHEWAN ARCHIVES

The Shiny House 'with a view more like a nobleman's park than anything else, with pretty glades bordered by young timber'.

appear to have been an 'all important question' that he knew nothing of farming or the rigours of pioneer life. Canadian winters and their attendant hardships were not mentioned in his correspondence. The prospect of the good, free life of a country gentleman, riding over his vast acres carpeted with an incredible variety of wild flowers, was too idyllic to be resisted.

'Anyone with industry and a little money is bound to do well' he wrote while still on board ship. 'I am making friends with lots of people, most of them returning to Canada after a few months' visit to the old country, and they all seem more than contented with their new homes; you may be sure I keep up a pretty good fire of questions; there is nothing like trying to get all the information you can from genuine colonists of the better class such as these young men on board.' He wrote of the luxury and delights of their first-class voyage across the Atlantic. 'At six o'clock we had dinner, a plenteous spread, soups, fish, and no end of entrees and joints and sweets; I don't think we shall have any occasion to grumble at the Commissariat.' They enjoyed the voyage. The promenade deck was 'a capital stretch for a constitutional' ; there was 'a spacious and handsome saloon, and a nice little music room with a good piano by Brindsmead', and the sea ran smooth.



No letter from James described the train journey across Canada by Canadian Pacific Railway. This phase of the trip was relayed by Ernest who set down his impressions with the bluntness and honesty of a

nineteen-year-old. 'The trains creep along at a miserable pace, a sort of steam funeral, and they are always being blocked by luggage trains. In one place we came to a hill and found a goods train with one engine on which could not get up the hill, so they had to take off our engine and shove behind to get it out of the way. On the Intercolonial the engine broke down, the blow-off cock plug dropped, and all the steam blew off, so we stopped about an hour on the line while they bunged it up and got up steam again. The engines are awful rotten things. This isn't a bad sort of place, the people are all very nice, but there's no railway of course, and it's a fearful drive to Moosomin when there's a cold wind.'

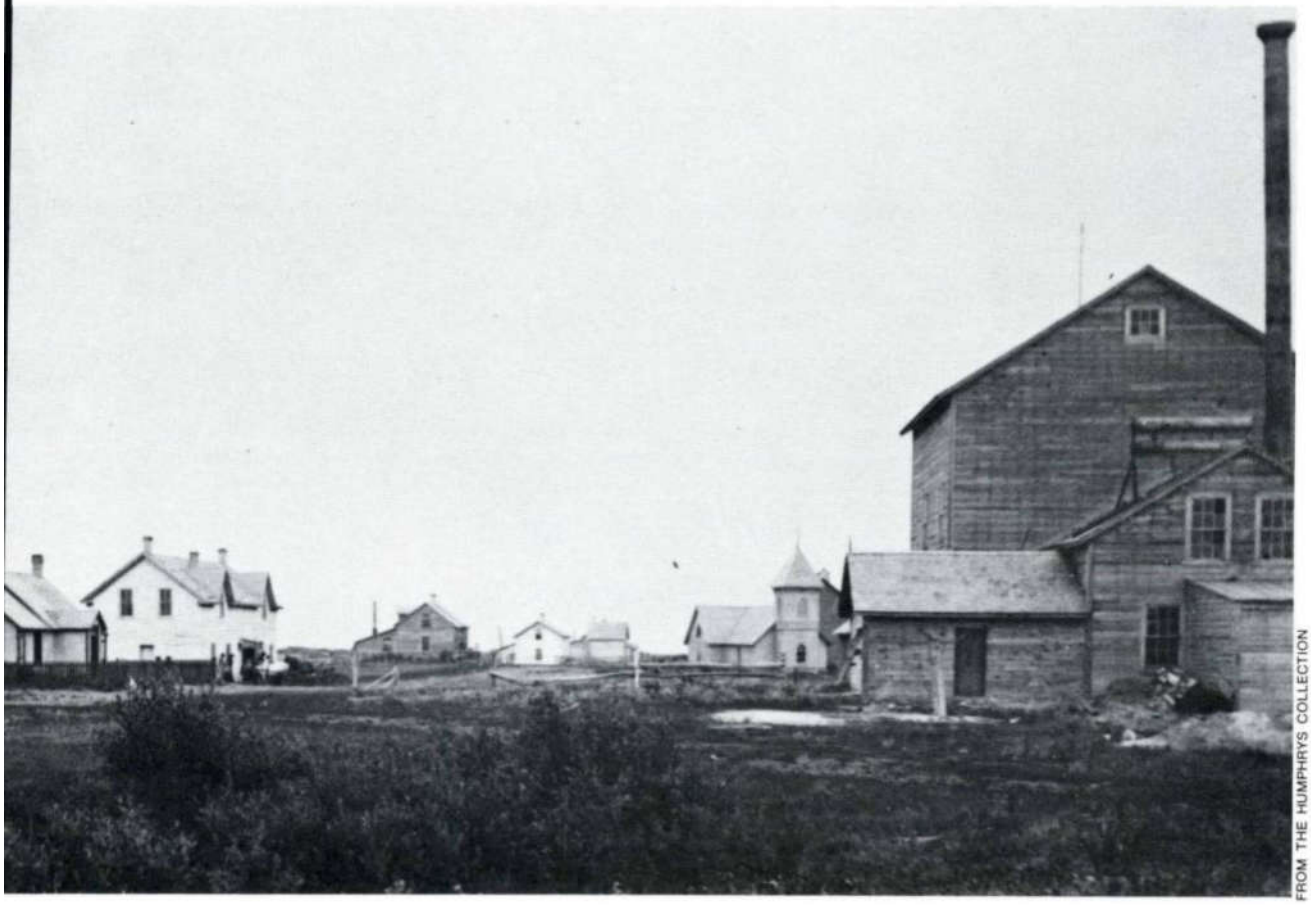
Log houses were also described as 'awful rotten things'. 'They built them of green logs and when they dry and contract they make all the floors and ceilings shift and the door frames go wrong, etc. The partition walls are mostly made of match boarding which is generally unseasoned when put in. It shrinks fearfully and then the boards part and leave wide cracks between them.'

The quality of the food at the Mitre Hotel in Cannington Manor was not up to his standards either. He wrote: 'The chief food at the hotel here is beefsteak. It doesn't matter what part of the beast it is, it's always beefsteak, and is always cut thin and fried and is as tough as old boots; they say it mostly comes from the neck of the oxen where the yoke has been.'

What Jenny thought of all this, or whether she shared her husband's dreams and enthusiasm, we do not know. She probably did not have too much time to think. From James's letters we know she was fully occupied in closing up their home, packing their 'settlers effects', and disposing of what was not to be taken. There were innumerable details to be discussed with their solicitor, and the actual business of shipping their goods was delayed and so complicated that it seems to have taken much of her time. During the summer she and the children moved to 'Grannie's' and she had all her teeth extracted. Presumably she wrote weekly, but her letters have not survived. James's letters, still with the Humphrys family, gave detailed replies to her questions about domestic problems.

On the same day that the purchase of the land was made, James ordered materials to 'run up' the stable in order to have housing for the work people. The house plans he had drawn up in England were revised, and he

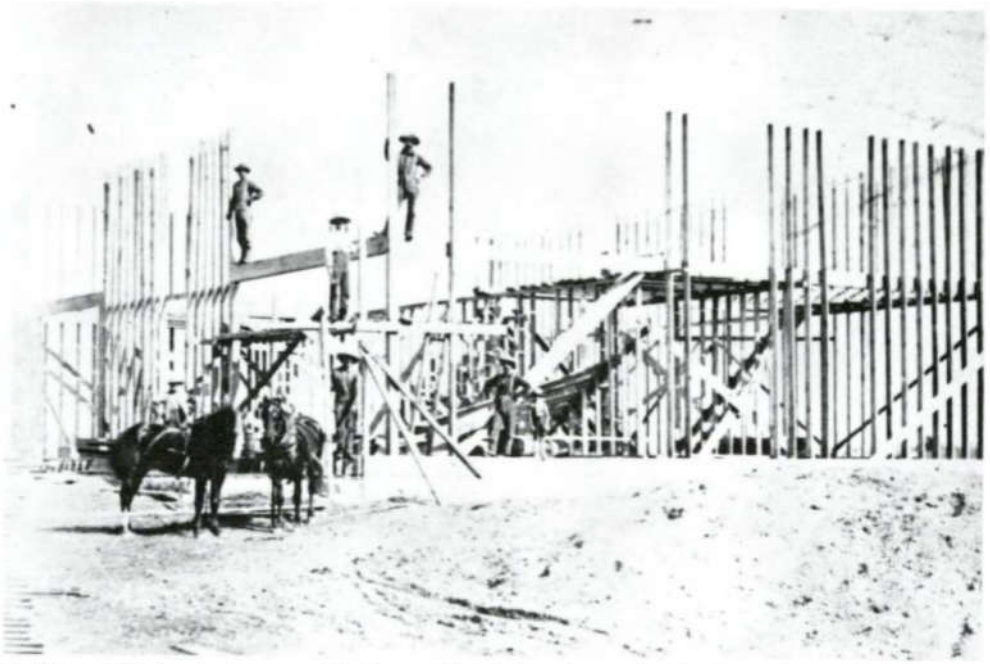
'We shall do wisely to settle here and not at Winnipeg . . .' wrote James Humphrys. Below is Cannington Manor c.1890. The Mitre Hotel is on the left; Cannington mill (right) once won first prize at the Chicago World's Fair for its flour.



FROM THE HUMPHRYS COLLECTION

FROM THE HUMPHRYS COLLECTION

On the Humphrys' land the stable was built first 'as a place in which the workmen can sleep and have their meals so as to be always on the spot while the house is building'.



By 12 June 1888 'already a large part of the framework or skeleton is erected and by the end of the week I expect we shall have the roof timbers up'. The photographs on this page were taken by Ernest who, his father wrote, 'is scheming to fix up a dark corner somewhere soon and will then take some views'.

This view of the completed house is probably the first one to be taken. It was built in less than four months — 'quite a feat even in this country of rapid building'. The house still stands today.

prepared estimates of quantity and costs. He and Ernest trudged over the whole section searching for the right site. A letter describing this inspection captures his excitement: 'Section 9 is beautifully situated and we spotted several charming sites for a house with a view more like a nobleman's park than anything else, with pretty glades bordered by young timber twenty to thirty feet high, spreading out into rolling country broken with timber, and the mountain forming the background and skyline. The people here enjoy themselves too, with riding parties of ladies and gentlemen, picnics up in the woods and lakes, etc. Horses are a luxury that everyone can afford, as they cost little or nothing to keep and are very cheap to buy. Mary would enjoy the riding here. The stories we have read of the beauties of the prairie flowers are literally true. The season is abnormally late this year so that I cannot speak of any of the flowers yet, but the Pasque flower should have been out by now; then they have carpets of beautiful tiger lilies about one foot high, roses, and I can't remember the names of lots more. This part of the country appears to be wonderfully favored, as they never are visited with big hail storms to beat down the crops, or summer frosts, although only seven or eight miles to the north and ten or twelve to the south they are subject to these terrors. I suppose the simple explanation is that when these visitations come the wind is from the west or northwest, this part escapes, being under the lee of the [Moose] Mountain.

He and Ernest went to Moosomin and bought the necessary tools, and a team and wagon. They set up a camp on the grounds and hired a gang of workmen and a foreman whom he described as 'very intelligent and skilful'. The foreman's wife and three children joined the work party and the wife undertook the job of cooking for the building crew and her family. They were sixteen in all. How James was able to make this happy arrangement so quickly he does not say. He did the catering and was, of course, his own contractor. He purchased more stock and farm equipment and began to involve himself in the village life, and every Sunday morning he wrote long, detailed letters to his 'darling wifie' and signed them 'your devoted hubs, James Humphrys'.

Although he had sent tracings of the house to Jenny, he wrote a full explanation of the plan. 'The hall, you will note, is quite a feature with the opening sixteen feet long and five feet thro' the ceiling into the landing. [The 'landing' was the wide hall of the second floor.] The staircase will be very easy indeed as the steps are only six inches high. You will see I have provided a back stair so that the principal stair can be kept free from dirty boys and girls tramping up and down. I have altered the arrangement of the bedrooms, giving a larger number of small rooms and a better shape than in the plan I sketched in England. I have made provision for a good store room and linen room both of which you will see are properly lighted . . . The house will be heated by a furnace in the cellar with warm air distributed by suitable tubes. This is a most efficient and economical mode of heating and it will keep the rooms free from dust which is a great nuisance when rooms are heated by stoves. Then also this system provides not only warm air but a perfect circulation of fresh air, which renders the atmosphere

very pleasant and quite different from the close stifling heat of stoves. I think you will like the shape of the drawing room with its octagonal end and also the deep square window in the dining room and the verandah in front.'

By the end of the month he was able to write that the stable was ready to house the horses and cows and himself and Ernest. The foundation walls of the house were built and the framing about to start. 'It is quite interesting work for me, and I can assure you one has to keep one's wits well about one, there are so many things to arrange about. I shall do very little in the way of breaking ground this year, a patch for potatoes, a few acres for wheat, and double the area for oats, and a kitchen garden. Milk, butter and eggs, we shall begin to raise ourselves right away . . . I am constituted lay reader of the church and am to have a license from the Bishop to take the service in case of the Parson's absence, and I shall have to do this next Sunday. I am, as you may well imagine, up to my neck in work.'

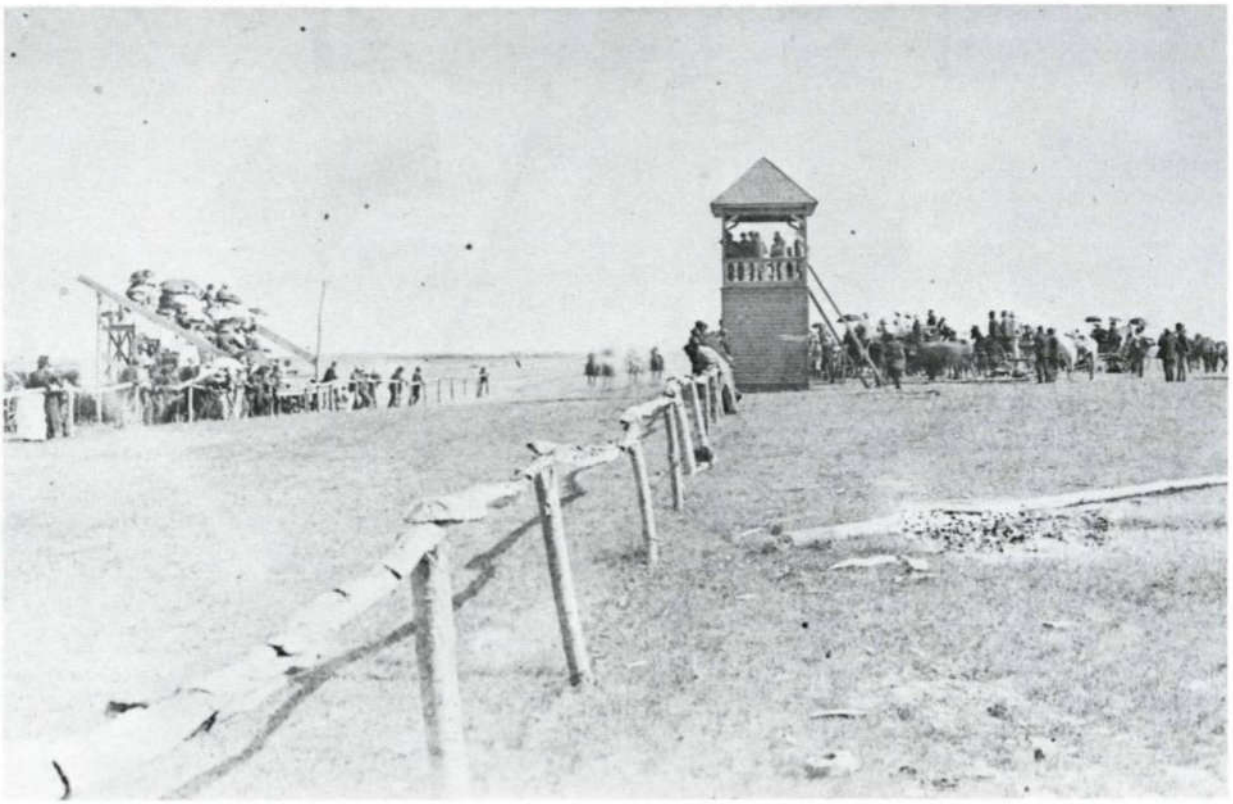
Indeed he was. In addition to his house building and first attempts at farming, he was active in making arrangements to bring in a resident doctor. He played a part in having a school established in the village, although his later opinion of it is illustrated in a story that was told by one of his sons. On the boy's first day at school he had an argument with the teacher on a point in algebra. He brought the problem home to his father who looked it over and said in essence 'You're right. The teacher's wrong. There's no use going to that school any more.' And that ended one son's formal education.

James found time too for the leisure activities of the settlement. In June he wrote 'The 22nd inst. will be a great day here as they have sports, horse-racing, running, jumping, etc. People come quite long distances, fifty to sixty miles or more and there will be a big camp and grand jinks. They finish up with a concert and after that a dance. I have promised to sing and Ernest is the accompanist. There is also to be a big picnic up the mountain to the lake the next day.'

His letter of July 1st reported that the house was 'going up like magic'. The plasterers were working on the ground floor even as the roof was being put on. He does not say if it was at this time that he put on the tin roof which was responsible for the unofficial name of the house. It stood on a slight rise of land and in those days the reflection of the sun's rays on the tin sheeting could be seen in all directions for long distances. The Indians in the area called it 'The Shiny House'.

The letter continues, 'I expect to be able to have the kitchen and three or four bedrooms ready for occupation in a week when we can shift from the stable to the house.' Then came his surprise for Jenny; their twentieth wedding anniversary had been on June 17th. 'I have bought seventeen fox skins, very good ones with splendid brushes, and these I shall have made into a carriage rug with the tails forming a sort of fringe for

Horse racing on the Cannington Manor track (shown below, 1889) was taken seriously by the English community. Some of the best racing horses on the continent were bred and trained at Cannington by the Beckton brothers in the 1890s.



your Victoria which has arrived from Moosomin and will be brought out here this week, so you will be quite a swell with your pretty turn out and smart pair of ponies. I hear they are purposing to make me a J. P. here and have also been asking me if I will consider about standing at the next election as member of the provincial parliament* which it is expected will before long be established in lieu of the present council. I am writing this about 4 o'clock in the morning as I have turned out early to enjoy the beautiful morning. Today is Sunday and the Parson being away south I have to take the service and Ernest will be organist which I think he is quite pleased about. We had some music last evening at the Harry Birds who have a piano so I figured in great style with my flute and singing.'

By mid-July he had moved the men to the attic of the house. The stove was in place in the kitchen, the painting had started, and most of the windows were installed. It was with a touch of justifiable satisfaction that he wrote 'The building of this house is regarded as a wonderful feat here and people who smiled incredulously two months ago when I said I intended to have it about ready by the end of July think me rather a caution now in the way of rapid house-building; well you know it is only ABC for me who has been used to tackling big steam ships which had to be completed so quickly.'

At the end of the month James and Ernest moved into one of the finished bedrooms 'and did enjoy the change from the stable as I did not sleep very well there. The perpetual noise and smell from the horses were rather too much for me.' The essential work on the house was well in hand and he now assured Jenny that he planned to be in England towards the end of August. 'There is a general wish in the settlement that I should be their leader and take the reins. Well, I shall not object, especially as I really think I shall be able to make the place keep going ahead.'

The story of Cannington Manor is well known; in spite of the industry and optimism of its settlers, the tiny village did not go ahead. Soon after his arrival in the settlement James had written 'I cannot think that an important and rapidly increasing settlement like this place and the country both north and south of it will be left much longer without a railway passing through it.'

But when the branch line of the Canadian Pacific Railway was built it ran several miles to the south and spelled the end of hopes for the growth of the community. However when James left for England in August of 1888 to bring out his family to the house he had built in less than four months the future looked bright indeed. The first chapter in the beautiful dream had been realized; the second was about to begin. ◆

HUMPHRYS COLLECTION

Ernest Humphrys, who travelled to Canada with his father stands on the right, with his brothers (clockwise) Billy, Jimmy, Noel and Frank.

The story of the Humphrys family at Cannington Manor continues in the Summer 1977 issue of *The Beaver*.

* *Saskatchewan became a province in 1905, two years after his death.*

SAMUEL ASH: OJIBWAY ARTIST

BY JAMES ANSON WARNER

Visiting Associate Professor, Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Concordia University, Montreal, and author of 'The Life and Art of the North American Indian'.

ONE OF THE NOTABLE SCHOOLS of Indian painting now flourishing in Canada is the group of Cree/Ojibway artists whose subject matter, in the main, is the traditional legends and stories of their people. They live in the pre-Cambrian Shield region in the northern forests of Ontario and Manitoba. One of the youngest of these artists is Samuel Ash. He is an Ojibway from the Osnaburgh Reserve located on Lake St. Joseph in Ontario.

Sam Ash, a deaf-mute, was born in 1951 in Sioux Lookout, Ontario. His mother died at his birth and he was raised at Pickle Lake by foster parents until, in 1957, he enrolled in the Ontario School for the Deaf in Belleville. After his graduation from that institution in 1970, he has lived, off and on, in Thunder Bay, Ontario, where he is still close to sources of inspiration concerning the legends of his Ojibway people.

Despite the handicaps — both physical and cultural — under which he must labour, Ash has learned to read and write with enough fluency to be able to communicate with the outside world.

Unlike the Western mind which insists on distinctions between the living and non-living, and man and nature, the Algonkian sees all creation as one entity. Everything is relative and derived from the greater creator force (Manitou). However, beneath the supremacy of the creator force is a fragmented universe of spirit power. Spirit power is everywhere and in every thing. The problem for mankind is that some spirits are good and benevolent; others are evil and destructive.

Hence, it is important for an Algonkian to seek out the protection of beneficent spirits in order to have sufficient power to counteract or overcome the designs of the malevolent forces of the universe. The search for personal power is omnipresent amongst the Algonkian and this quest explains the importance of shamans in their culture. Shamans, who possess more power than ordinary men and women — either for good or evil depending on the shaman — are sought out in time of need.

Often, as is seen in the texts of the legends themselves, the world is interpreted as a place where malevolence and violence are commonplace experiences. These concepts undoubtedly reflect a worldly reality where living is not an easy matter. To make their living by hunting, fishing, gathering, and trapping, the people must often face danger to life and limb in the wilderness. It is a milieu where even the wisest and most experienced hunter can meet with tragic misfortune,or even an expert fisherman, who is a prodigious swimmer, will be found drowned for seemingly inexplicable reasons. The sometimes capricious and harsh face of nature is reflected in the hardships enumerated in Algonkian legends.

Ash has given each one of his paintings a title and it is his practice to enclose a short story — written with his hard-won command of the English language — with every work. The following is his abbreviated tale of 'Brave Mullets Against Mad Wolf', the painting on the opposite page.

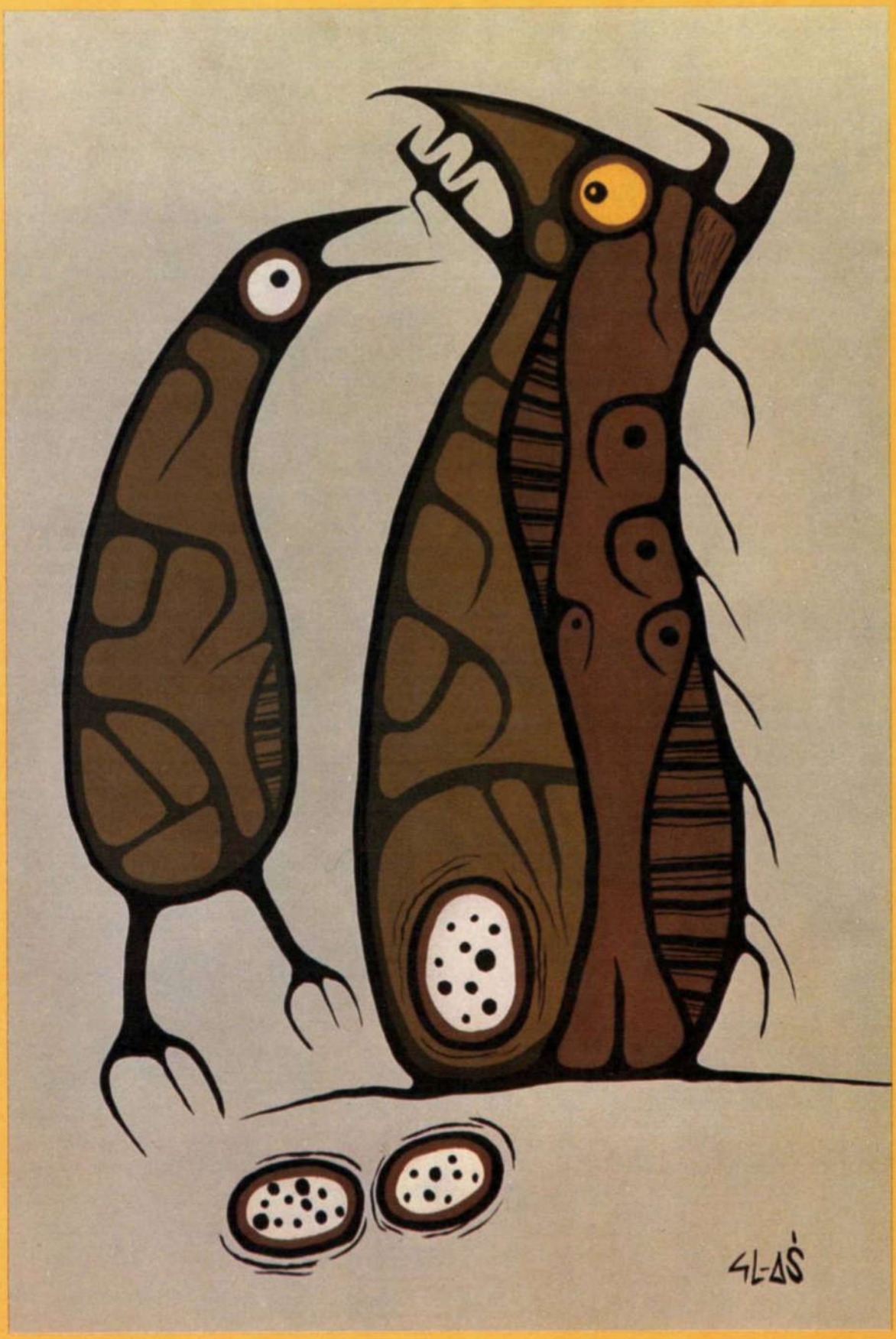
One morning the mother mullet was leaving its eggs alone so she could look for the food to eat. When she returned home she feel shock that one egg was missing from its nest. She heard something wrong and thought there's a Mad Wolf or Hungry Wolf or Evil Wolf at the bush.

Later she found that the two eggs would soon break and the little birds would get free of the shells. She must take care of them until they were old enough. After a few weeks she told them about the Mad Wolf. Next morning the two brave young mullets went to find the wolf. While they were gone the mother went to search for something to eat. She didn't know that the Mad Wolf was near her. The young birds saw the wolf and yelled at her to watch out. They felt brave and attacked the Wolf. It got scared and was running away. The mother thanked them for saving her life and then they stayed all together.

From a technical standpoint, legend paintings are not easy to do. Apart from the problem of properly visualizing the figures on paper, there is the matter of simplifying any moment within a legend's stream of narrative in order to have a coherent and properly focused picture. If one 'cuts into' the narrative stream at any level, there are certain events which will have to be judged as extraneous so that the painting will have a central focus. This is a problem that Ash handles in all of his paintings. His primary medium is acrylic on illustration board.

Aesthetically, Ash is a fetching painter. The figures he draws are compelling in their boldness; his lines are steady and from the standpoint of craftsmanship alone, his work is admirable.

After a successful first exhibition of his work in Thunder Bay in 1973, Ash has gone on to consistent acclaim. His paintings are now exhibited in galleries from coast to coast and a Winnipeg firm has reproduced two of his works in limited silkscreen editions. Most recently — from 7 April to 7 May 1976 — one of Ash's paintings was included in an exhibition at the Canada House Gallery in Trafalgar Square in London, England. In an exhibition entitled 'Contemporary Native Art of Canada — The Woodland Indians,' Ash was included with other distinguished contemporaries: Norval Morrisseau, Carl Ray, Joshim Kakegamic, Daphne Odjig, Blake Debassige, Jackson Beardy, and others. It was symbolic of his arrival amongst the first rank of the Algonkian legend painters of Canada. ♦



THE LITTLE EMPEROR
Governor Simpson of the Hudson's Bay Company

By John S. Galbraith. Macmillan Company of Canada, Toronto, 1976. 232 pp., illus. $16.95.

Reviewed by Glyndwr Williams

Professor Galbraith's biography of George Simpson has been long and eagerly awaited. Since A. S. Morton's 'pen picture' of Simpson appeared more than thirty years ago a wealth of documentation on the Hudson's Bay Company in the nineteenth century has been published, and work by several scholars — including Galbraith himself — has added greatly to our knowledge of the 'Simpson period' in the Company's history. Morton's expectation that the steady publication of Company records from the Archives would reveal Simpson in his entirety for a future, luckier biographer has been largely disappointed: the serried ranks of letter books and boxes containing Simpson's business papers are in no way matched by private correspondence. John Galbraith's biography begins with a rueful understatement, 'Sir George Simpson cherished fame but guarded his private life'. Many men of eminence have sought to protect their privacy; few have managed to do so with such success that even the most assiduous biographer is unable to give the year of birth of his subject or anything more than a few passing details of the first thirty years of his life.

In short, Professor Galbraith was faced with a problem, for it is clear from his approach that he was determined to write a biography in the proper sense, not simply a history of the Hudson's Bay Company between 1820 and 1860 which featured Simpson. For most of Simpson's career, although there is no great corpus of private papers, there is in fact more scattered material relating to the Governor's personal activities than is perhaps generally realized. Simpson's own outspoken, gossipy letters to J.G. McTavish are exceptional, but in a region where a man's private and business life were closely intertwined the regular correspondence both of Simpson and his associates in the fur trade contains many revealing asides. These have been used most effectively by Galbraith to build up a picture of Simpson which is — to speak frankly — unattractive and unprepossessing. The case against Simpson rests on two main foundations: that his decisions on the disposition of his subordinate officers were influenced by personal prejudice, sometimes of the most virulent kind; and that his attitude towards mixed-blood women and (in a different way and to a lesser extent) his wife Frances was condescending and contemptuous. On the latter there is little defence for Simpson. It is not a question of applying today's standards, for compared with the behaviour of many of his colleagues in the fur trade faced with similar problems of human relations Simpson behaved harshly, and on at least one occasion abominably, towards the women he lived with. More central in an evaluation of Simpson as Governor is his attitude towards his subordinates in the fur trade, and here there is ample evidence to suggest that personal bias influenced his professional judgement. The rankling feuds with John Clarke, Colin Robertson, John McLean and John McLoughlin are cases in point, although it should be remembered that if Simpson showed ruthlessness and insensitivity in dealing with these men, the faults were by no means all on one side.

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But there was another aspect to Simpson, and this perhaps is not given due weight. In the fur trade were men whom Simpson respected — Alexander Christie, John Rowand, Duncan Finlayson, Angus Cameron, James Hargrave, James Douglas among them — and as far as we can tell the respect was usually mutual. With some of them, Rowand and Cameron certainly, Christie probably, a genuine friendship seems to have developed. In dealing with more junior employees, Simpson was not all hardness and sharpness; towards some of the weaker brethren in the Company's employ he showed a tolerance which baffled many of his officers. A man in Simpson's position, who had appeared from nowhere as far as the fur trade was concerned, and pushed his way to the top in quick time, was bound to make enemies in the process. Once in a dominant position, although Simpson's pettymindedness did not help his cause, the Governor found himself with more claimants for preference than the Company could ever accommodate, and some of the bitterest attacks on Simpson came from men resentful at their failure to gain promotion.

For two-thirds of the book Galbraith writes wonderfully well of Simpson's rise to power and those years of command when, racked with ill-health (tinged with hypochondria?) and domestic problems, he established his mastery over the Company's North American operations. Travelling furiously backwards and forwards across the continent, supervising, disciplining, innovating, Simpson stamped his personal characteristics of orderliness, economy, and ruthlessness on the sprawling network of the Company's trading activities. The concluding chapters of the book, where Simpson's later roles as 'statesman' and 'capitalist' come under scrutiny, are inevitably less colourful and dramatic. As the stage across which Simpson moved became more crowded, so he dwindled a little in size and importance. The Governor whose record-breaking journeys across the Company's territories had made him a legend, set-

tled down to a more sedate life at Lachine where he became a substantial member of the Montreal business community with useful political connections. He still served the Company faithfully, but it no longer represented his whole life as it had done in the 1820s and 1830s. Simpson's career coincided with the Company's dominance of the Canadian fur trade; he arrived in North America the year before the coalition with the North West Company, he died in the decade when the Hudson's Bay Company surrendered its chartered rights. His abilities were crucial in enabling the Company to establish that dominance; as Professor Galbraith writes in his final sentence, 'The times gave him the opportunity for greatness; he capitalized magnificently on the opportunity'.

Dr. Williams is professor of history at Queen Mary College, University of London, and former general editor of the Hudson's Bay Record Society.

THE PIONEER YEARS 1895-1914
Memories of Settlers Who Opened the West

By Barry Broadfoot. Doubleday Canada Limited. Toronto. 1976. 403 pp., illus. $12.50.

THE LAST BEST WEST

By Jean Bruce. Fitzhenry & Whiteside, Toronto, 1976, in association with the Multiculturalism Programme, Department of the Secretary of State. 177 pp., illus. $14.95.

THE LAND OF OPEN DOORS
Being Letters from Western Canada 1911-13

By J. Burgon Bickersteth. University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1976. 266 pp., illus., Cloth $15.00/paper $5.50.

Reviewed by Wilfred Eggleston

All of these books have as their subject the settlement of western Canada, but there is little duplication. Indeed, in some respects they are radically different. The occupation of the Canadian West, between the Red and the Rockies, was at its peak in the period between 1896 and the outbreak of World War I: over sixty million acres of land were settled; over a million people came and stayed. Hundreds of urban communities were born; thousands of miles of railway were built. It is a large theme in Canadian history and is sufficiently complex to call for a variety of attack and treatment.

The simplest and in some respects most readable of these three books is an artless series of family letters written in the period 1911-13 by a graduate of Oxford, a young Anglican missionary serving in pioneer farming country northwest of Edmonton and on the new railway lines pushing west to Jasper. J. Burgon Bickersteth was in his early twenties and he was, in a sense, 'drafted' to serve in the North West. He arrived with inescapable class prejudices and assumptions of superiority, but he buckled down manfully and served with devotion and understanding. He wrote frankly to his parents and skilfully etched a series of frontier vignettes which were absorbing then, and,

Mabel F. Hesketh-Biggs cutting oats with team and mower at Beynon, Alta. From 'The Last Best West' by Jean Bruce.

GLENBOW-ALBERTA INSTITUTE, CALGARY

more remarkable, are still fresh and lively. It was Bickersteth's good fortune, I suppose, that one of his letters fell into the hands of Earl Grey, recently returned to Britain from several terms as Canada's Governor General. Grey recognized their merit and recommended publication. Three editions followed at once; there was a 'cheap' edition in September 1919, and now, over sixty years after their first appearance they are reprinted by the University of Toronto Press, with a new introduction by their octogenarian author, living in retirement at Canterbury. The current edition is an item in the series *The Social History of Canada*. I read these letters long ago; I find they do not lose their original charm and human appeal.

The compilation by Jean Bruce draws on the literature of prairie settlement and is richly illustrated by a series of excellent photographs. It provides a perspective missing from the other two. The drama of pioneer settlement was, in the main, played out on the frontier itself: but the drama was conceived and directed from Ottawa. The occupation of the West was largely haphazard and voluntary until 1896: then Clifford Sifton and Frank Oliver and their governments embarked on an international promotion scheme which rapidly sold 'The Last Best West' to a multitude of land-hungry peoples in half a hundred lands around the world. We see in the Bruce book the Grand Design, missing in the other two books. It has the merit that the numerous extracts are drawn from the documents of the time. They are not, however, closely woven; we get a patchwork quilt or mosaic rather than a living organism. There is the raw material of drama, but the reader has to put the bits and pieces together in his mind and imagination.

If a reader wants to know 'How it Really Was' he will find in Barry Broadfoot's book, sub-titled *Memories of Settlers Who Opened the West*, a harvest gleaned from a rich field spread over three provinces and over an era of seven decades or so. Broadfoot disarms the critic by his own classification: 'I am not a historian. I am a person who travels across the country and listens to people talk about themselves.' From internal evidence many of the people he found are in their eighties and nineties. He has made his collection just in time. The Broadfoot book consists entirely and solely of anonymous reminiscences. This is, of course, its strength: but the method is subject to inevitable limitations. There are bound to be memory failures, bound to be superficial impressions, trivia, gossip, distortions of time and space. But he has chosen well and sifted carefully and the total effect is impressive. It is the most illuminating and most valuable collection of actual memories that I personally have ever seen. There is no doubt as to the authenticity. I too can look back in 1977 over a span of nearly seven decades to the frontier days on an Alberta homestead and can check my own recollections against many of these stories. They add up to a saga of pioneer settlement rich in all the elements: hope and despair, tragedy and comedy, helpless incompetence and tough ingenuity, loneliness and idyllic community spirit, ferocious storms and smiling benevolence of nature at her most glorious.

Broadfoot supplies his own summary, hard to improve upon. The men and women he interviewed 'told me of the wrench of leaving home, the long trip across ocean and continent, and, often, the arrival at a railway shack with no one to meet them and no idea of where to go. Most of them trekked by wagon to their piece of land and built their first home — a cabin, a soddy, or an ugly little poplar-pole shack. They recalled the cruelty of the prairie winter and the hammering heat of July when the green shoots of their first crop came up through the black earth and then withered and died. They described the trip to town with their crops; and the schoolteacher and the small school they built her and the dances and weddings and prayer meetings they held in it, opportunities for members of a new community to get together and meet one another. They had good words for the mounted police and harsh words for bad neighbours'.

It is tempting to write about 'The Last Best West' in terms of sharp contrast between the Dream and the Reality. The free land was there, sure enough; freedom was there, certainly. The free land was not won without paying a price; and the freedom had to be earned and defended against encroachments. Some immigrants were misled; some were gullible; some were weak; some were foolish. There were pathetic casualties of frontier life. There was stark disillusionment and heartbreak. The West was a cruel sieve that rejected the worthless and the inadequate. It rewarded the courageous and the patient, the ingenious and the thrifty. Taken together these three books complement one another and provide useful additions to a literature which is growing and seems just now to be dealing once more with a fashionable theme. It will be long before its possibilities have been exhausted.

Wilfred Eggleston is retired director of the School of Journalism, Carleton University, Ottawa. His book 'The Frontier and Canadian Letters' was reissued, 1977, in the Carleton Library Series, McClelland and Stewart.

A PIONEER GENTLEWOMAN IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

The Recollections of Susan Allison

Margaret A. Ormsby (ed). The University of British Columbia Press, Vancouver, 1976. 262 pp., illus., map. $18.95.

Reviewed by Shirlee A. Smith

Susan Allison's recollections of her life in the Hope-Princeton-Okanagan Lake area from the 1860s to the 1890s were written when she was in her eighties. The passing of years has a tendency to distort the balance of everyday events and this is true of Mrs Allison's memory. From her recollections one gets the high-wheeling lights and drama of a western frontier: forest fires, floods, epidemics, a shoot-out, and hanging. The mundane details that give more of an insight into pioneer life and people are missing. How was her home furnished? What kind of clothes did she wear? Why did she dislike J. Haynes, her husband's unmarried partner? It is possible to get the occasional tantalizing hint of an answer to some of these questions. This reviewer would not have liked Haynes either. He sounds like a churlish bachelor when he objects to her putting up curtains in the dining room and using a proper tablecloth instead of oilcloth. Only an insensitive clod would find it impossible not to admire the courage and endurance of this well-educated woman who performed all the duties of a pioneer wife, while having 14 children in 23 years.

Susan Allison had a discerning eye and a romantic turn of mind.

Susan Allison. From 'A Pioneer Gentlewoman in British Columbia'.

Witness her description of Angus McDonald, in charge of the Hudson's Bay Company pack train from Fort Colvile to Hope.

> . . . I heard bells tinkling and looking up saw a light cloud of dust from which emerged a solitary horseman, the most picturesque figure I had ever seen. He rode a superb chestnut horse, satiny and well groomed, untired and full of life in spite of the dust, heat and long journey. He himself wore a beautifully embroidered buckskin shirt with tags and fringes, buckskin pants, embroidered leggings and soft cowboy hat.

Her descriptions of the Similkameen Indians are equally well done and to date are the most authoritative.

Students of British Columbia history have long taken for granted Margaret Ormsby's scholarly work; this book is no exception to her usual high standards. The introduction is a sound setting for the 72 pages of recollections; the detailed notes are informative and invaluable to an understanding of the book. A few errors have been noted. Roderick McLean in charge of Keremeos from 1863-1867 was not a Chief Factor; and Joe McKay was not in charge of the Hudson's Bay Company's north coast trading establishments from 1846-49 — nor was he promoted to Chief Factor. The map has no scale and footnoting in the traditional manner would have made the book easier to read.

None the less, this book is an important contribution to the history of the British Columbia interior. The publication of the book was made possible by grants from Canada Council and other foundations. It is a credit to everyone.

Shirlee A. Smith is the Hudson's Bay Company Archivist.

MY COUNTRY
The Remarkable Past

By Pierre Berton. McClelland and Stewart, Toronto, 1976. 320 pp., illus. $12.95.

Reviewed by Frits Pannekoek

Pierre Berton spins a good yarn. He is at his best in *My Country*, a collection of eighteen biographies of the bizarre and famous ranging from Samuel Hearne, the discoverer of the Coppermine River, to Brother XII, a religious megalomaniac. Each is written in traditional Berton manner. The prose is crowded with detail, colourful adjectives, and emotive adverbs, but the analysis is deficient, lacking both perception and judgement.

It must be emphasized that the volume is no more than a collection of eighteen good tales. The chapter on Samuel Hearne, for example, is largely an overstated summary of Hearne's published journal, a book which Berton should have treated with some scepticism. Hearne was asked, as were all Hudson's Bay Company servants sent into the interior, to keep a journal, and he was not about to minimize his substantial efforts on behalf of his employer. Creditable journals revealing arduous activity were the stuff of promotions — and Hearne, at thirty, did become Governor of Prince of Wales's Fort, the most important position the Company had to offer. Hearne's allegations that Moses Norton, his superior in 1770, kept a harem and would poison any who ventured even an appreciative glance, have been proven false by Professor Sylvia Van Kirk of the University of Toronto's History Department. The point to be made is that Berton has not explored his subjects in any depth and that his assessments are consequently never more than superficial.

My Country's lack of historical rigour could have been partially redeemed had the biographies made a statement about Canada. While this was apparently Berton's intent, if prefaces are to be believed, he makes no coherent comment about the nature of the Canadian confederation, its people, or its geography. The biographies are arranged in no discernible chronological or thematic order, skipping willy-nilly from century to century and from the unusual to the bizarre and back again. At times *My Country* is no more than a wordy collection of 'Believe It or Nots'.

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The potential for a more perceptive statement existed, for upon careful reflection the biographies are united by a single theme — that the Canadian 'spirit' is a product of man's constant struggle against a harsh northern environment. But Berton does not build upon this observation, one made by a good number of historians. To Berton the human product of the struggle is individualistic, resourceful, energetic, observant, somewhat of a rogue, and of course brave, as well as slightly eccentric. Berton's Canadian is really only a frostier version of the American cowboy. It should also come as no surprise that Berton's 'essential' Canadians are white and male. His two Indians, one a woman, both fail to survive the challenges of a changing land.

But, all in all, *My Country* is worth reading. The biographies should be relished and enjoyed for the myths and tales that they are. Canada lacks historical folklore. *My Country* is a good beginning.

Frits Pannekoek is Chief, Historic Research, Prairie Region, Parks Canada.

CANADA NORTH NOW

By Farley Mowat. McClelland and Stewart, Toronto, 1976. 192 pp., illus. $5.95.

Reviewed by Graham Rowley

In the Prologue to *Canada North Now* Mr Mowat, referring to an earlier version published in 1967 as *Canada North*, says 'I laid perhaps too much stress on the land's potential resources in the hope that these might provide an incentive to encourage Southerners to settle the North in an enduring manner.' The reader is therefore entitled to wonder what Mr Mowat is laying too much stress on in this version, and for what purpose. He does not have to wonder for long. On the next page he reads that 'Southern Canadians are now being hoodwinked into seeing the North as a cornucopia of riches'. This raises the interesting question of where 'laying too much stress on' ends, and 'hoodwinking' begins. It also makes it clear that Mr Mowat has now left the ranks of the developers. He has not become a friend of conservation so much as an enemy of development, seeing the machinations of international cartels behind every action of the government.

Canada North Now is divided into a number of chapters most of which deal with a particular major region, describing the geography, outlining the resources, and condemning what is being done to both. It is impossible to confirm or refute the generalizations. They are so wide and sweeping that they contain much that is false and omit much that is true. A test of their credibility is the accuracy of the author's facts, as it is difficult to draw correct conclusions from defective data. *Canada North Now* does not stand up to this test.

Some of the errors seem to be the result of careless research. The Canadian Shield is not five million years old; it is between 2.5 and 3 billion years old. No mountains in Ellesmere or Axel Heiberg islands have altitudes of over 10,000 feet; the highest is about 8,250 feet. None of the peaks in the St Elias Range exceed 20,000 feet. The ore Frobisher brought back to England was probably not iron pyrite. The Canadian Indian people north of 60 did not number 28,000 in 1976; there were fewer than half this figure. The number of permanently inhabited places in the Queen Elizabeth Islands is six, not three. There are many more mistakes of

Several knowledgeable northerners have questioned the identity of the Inuit woman (page 20, Winter 1976), identified by Author Philip Godsell in 1942 as Mina of the Belcher Islands. Those who knew the Inuit of the 1940s well, say that the style of dress, hair, and tattoo marks indicate that the lady was probably a Padlemiut from the west coast of Hudson Bay. Former Western Arctic District Manager, A. Copland, believes that she may be Shoofly, friend of Captain George Comer (See page 16). He adds that the pouches on her lower trousers were to slip her feet into for warmth when she was seated inside or tidying a snow house at the end of a day.

this sort. Even the quotation from the original version, which opens the book, is inaccurate. More serious are statements where the errors are not so obvious. It was not during the 1950s that the U.S. military 'was permitted to achieve something close to de facto control over much of the Canadian Arctic'. The U.S. military influence in the north was in fact greatest during the War and decreased after it. The Mid-Canada Line was a Canadian undertaking. A typical misleading statement is that the Northwest Territories was 'governed by the Deputy Minister of the Interior (later Mines and Resources) and a council consisting of representatives of the Roman Catholic and Anglican missions; the Fur Trade Commissioner of the Hudson's Bay Company; and the Commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.' The governing council never included representatives of either the missions or the Hudson's Bay Company.

Many other statements are presented as fact though most would consider them fantasy. They include the discovery of Baffin Island by Eric the Red in 982, a population of possibly 60,000 Eskimos in Canada prior to contact, and settlements established by Icelanders along the west coast of Ungava Bay.

It is difficult to see how the causes of conservation and the native people of the north, both of which in the reviewer's opinion need and deserve support, can be helped by special pleading that is so ill-founded.

The strength of *Canada North* lay in its striking, well-chosen and well-arranged illustrations, many in colour. They have been replaced in *Canada North Now* by black and white photographs (mainly of people in the Mackenzie Delta) which are not well reproduced. The editions are very different in other ways. The text has been shortened and up-dated in places and the format has changed from the hard cover quarto dominated by the illustrations to a paperback text with two separate sections of photographs.

Graham Rowley's long association with the Arctic dates back to his exploration and archaeological investigation of Foxe Basin, 1936-39. Until his recent retirement, he was scientific adviser to the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

CANOE CANADA

By Nick Nickels. Van Nostrand Reinhold Ltd., Toronto, 1976. 278 pp., illus. $9.95.

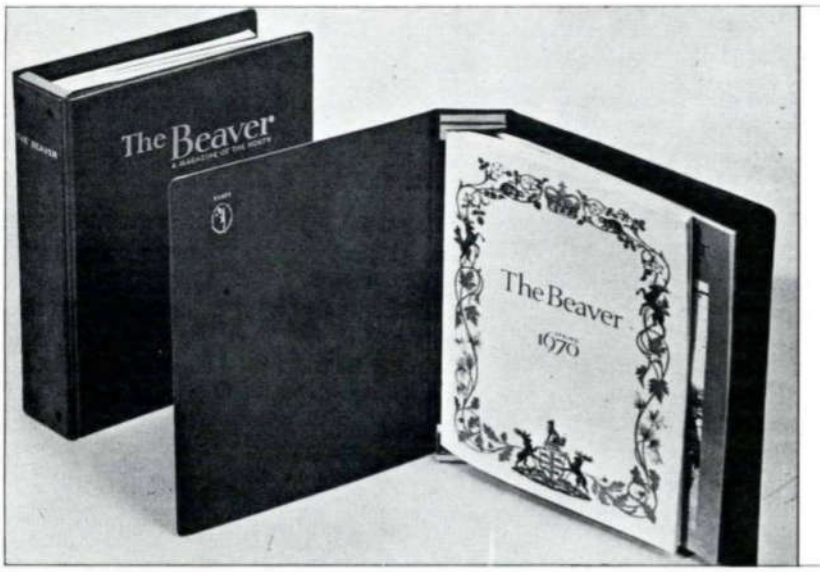
Reviewed by Alex M. Hall

At its best, Nick Nickels's *Canoe Canada* provides a thumb-nail sketch of some of the better-known canoe routes in the ten provinces and two territories. As such, the book will undoubtedly prove useful to those looking for canoe routes in areas with which they are unfamiliar. Addresses of air charter companies operating in different parts of the country are also listed for canoeists contemplating fly-in trips. The information offered on the 600 canoe routes is so cursory, however, that I was left with the impression that the book serves as little more than a catalogue of routes which author Nickels will gladly supply more detailed information on — for a fee. It is only fair to point out that much of the information is available in greater detail from various government agencies.

Nickels has given prominence to Ontario which accounts for more than one-third of the canoe routes described in the book. Quebec and northern British Columbia have received notably poor treatment. The Northwest Territories which comprise over one-third of the land mass of Canada have been dispensed with in a few paltry error-ridden pages.

The author's brief concluding chapters on canoeing and camping techniques are largely filled with trivia and statements of the obvious. These topics have been frequently dealt with in greater detail and with far greater competence by other authors in other books.

Alex Hall is a wildlife biologist and president of Canoe Arctic Inc., a guiding and outfitting service in the Northwest Territories.



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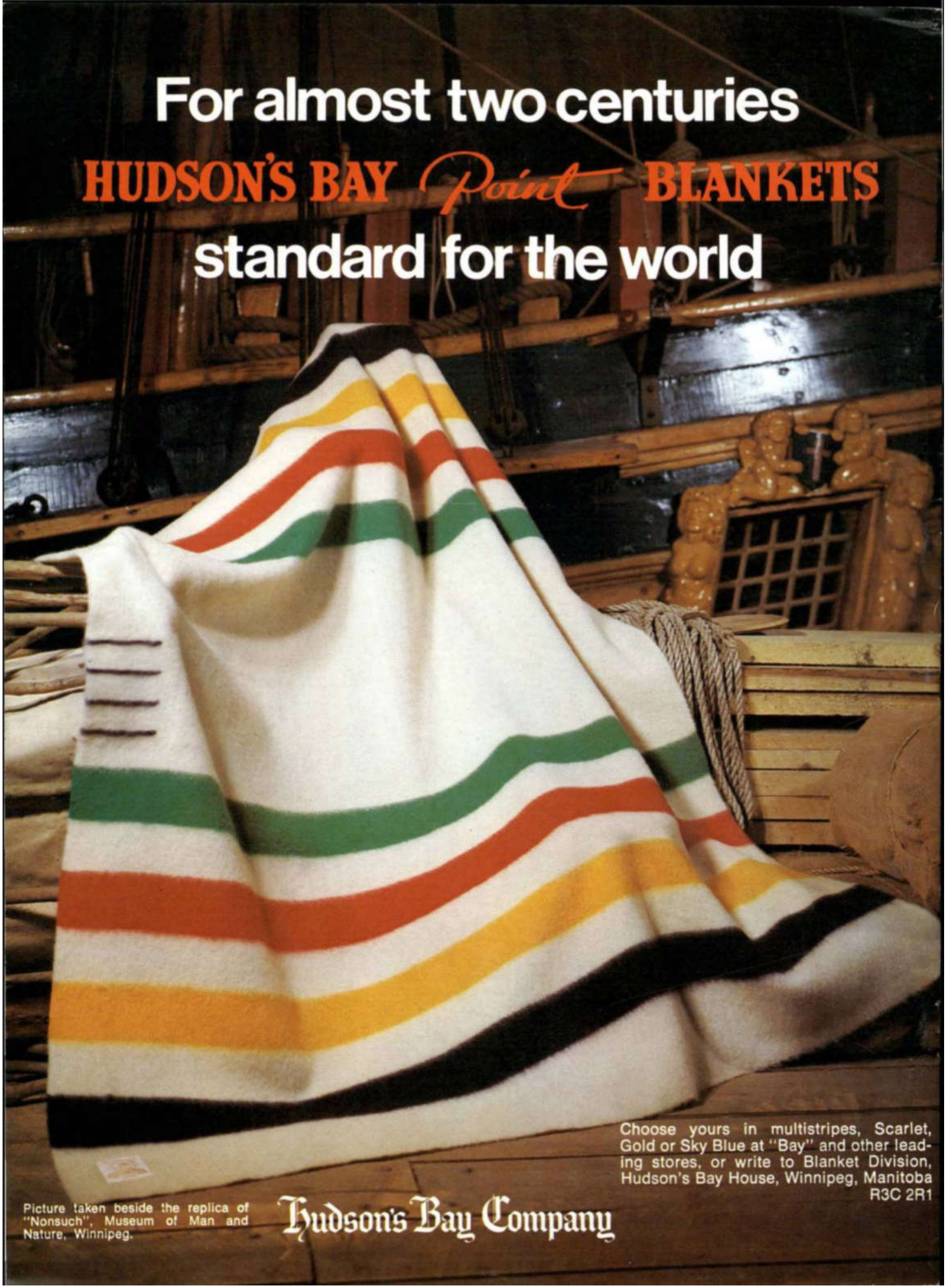
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